

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Volume 30 : Number Two : Summer 2009

The Journey of the Soul

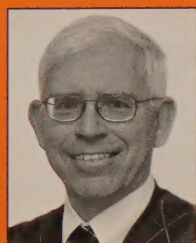
Spirituality and Psychotherapy

Supervision of Pastoral Ministry Students

The First Commandment and Sanity

T. S. Eliot's Life Cycle

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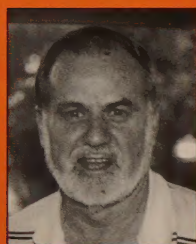
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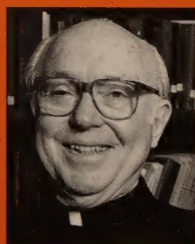
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JAMES J. GILL, S.J., M.D., a priest and psychiatrist, died peacefully on July 29, 2003, after a courageous battle with prostate and bone cancer.

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Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Each Other

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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The editors of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT are pleased to consider for publication articles relating to the ongoing work of those involved in helping other people through religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, education, and counseling.

Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief, Robert M. Hamma (rhmma@regis.edu) as an e-mail attachment. Please allow four to six weeks time for a response.

Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting the Bible, the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is preferred.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

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Editor's Page

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER

On the day I sat down to write this editorial the *New York Times* headline read, "660,000 More Jobs Lost; Total Surpasses 5 Million." The article quoted an economist as saying, "There's just no way we are anywhere near the bottom." I can only hope that by the time this issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT reaches our readers the situation will have improved.

The current economic downturn has been a cause of worry and concern for everyone, and in a particular way for us who carry on the work of the Church. No doubt, among those five million people who lost their jobs were some of our coworkers in ministry. Catholic institutions of all kinds—dioceses, parishes, schools, and others—have had to cut their budgets and reduce their staffs. Early retirements, layoffs, and salary freezes have become part of our experience too. If we were once isolated from such things, we are no longer.

It takes its toll. Worry, fear, or anger are hard to ignore. Yet how can we feel sorry for ourselves when we look at the pain and suffering of the people to whom we minister? Jobs lost, homes in foreclosure, students withdrawing from college. The lines at the food pantries are longer and the donations are down. The psychic strain mounts each day.

Recently a friend asked me, "How are you holding up?" "Oh, I'm fine" I was quick to respond. After all, I'm not dealing with half of what a lot of people are facing. "Are you really?" he persisted.

I appreciated the question, and even more having someone who cared to ask. The truth is that a lot of us in ministry are so focused on others that we don't stop long enough to focus on ourselves. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to pause and reflect on how we are doing. "Seriously," as teens like to say these days.

Recently, the television was filled with images of the citizens of Fargo, North Dakota passing sandbags down the line to build dikes against the rising Red River. They worked through long days and cold nights. They must have wondered how much longer they could go on. Then a blizzard struck. Yet somehow the walls held and the river receded. They endured and survived. Together.

As we do what we can to make our small contribution, to take our place in the line, it is hope that we are passing on to one another. Those people working together reminded me of the truth that's easy to forget in difficult times: We are in this together. None of us is alone. As we each do what we can to alleviate the suffering of others, our contribution is like one more sandbag that we pass on in an effort to build a wall of hope against a rising tide of adversity. A sense of aloneness can be the most debilitating aspect of any painful experience. In these hard times we need to remind one another of this.

This issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT was not composed to address the recession, but I think you will find in these articles seeds of hope to share with others. In his article "Spirituality and Psychotherapy," Dr. Thomas C. Barrett reminds us of the "vital role spirituality can play in helping people bear the weight of their personal anguish." Our faith sustains us in these times: "It's becoming abundantly clear that spiritually committed people seem to have higher degrees of happiness and life satisfaction, and lower levels of substance abuse, depression, and anxiety." Our interview with Ann Garrido likewise surfaced a bit of wisdom on the need to engage in theological reflection on our present experience to "understand our own life-story in light of something we have received from the gospel, or [to] understand

the gospel better in light of something in our own life experience."

Our former Editor-in-Chief, Fr. Bill Barry, returns with a wonderful article: "The First Commandment and Sanity: Faith Casts Out Fear." He invites us to focus on the deepest reality that endures through all of life's ups and downs: "We exist only because God desires us to exist, wants us; God's desire, God's wanting, creates us and keeps us in existence. We forget this basic truth at our peril." And Fr. Michael Fuller calls to mind an old adage from Alcoholics Anonymous

that is appropriate for times when hope may be hard to come by: "Religion is for those who do not want to go to hell, but spirituality is for those who have already been there."

We are grateful to these and all the authors who generously contributed to this issue.

Robert M. Hamma

Robert M. Hamma

Letter to the Editor

January 16, 2009

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the article in the Fall 2008 issue entitled "Hard Men as Peacemakers in Northern Ireland."

From 1993 until 2001, I served as President Clinton's representative to the International Fund for Ireland. In 1996, I was appointed by the President to succeed Senator George Mitchell as Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for Economic Initiatives in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. In these capacities, I was responsible for the efforts of the United States government and its various agencies to provide economic support, assistance and advice in support of the peace process which culminated in the Belfast Agreement, or Good Friday Agreement, in April 1998. Since that time, I have continued my keen interest in events in Northern Ireland and commentary about current and past events.

I might also add that I have served on the Board of Regis University since 1999 and was personally acquainted with Father James Gill, the founder of your publication and a wise, decent and pioneering voice for human development and community improvement.

Father Helmick's article overstates and exaggerates the role of Gusty Spence in bringing about conditions which led to the Good Friday Agreement and the social and political stability which now exists in Northern

Ireland. While it is true that certain "hard men" on the loyalist side lent their tacit support to various cease-fires and elements of the peace process, the true credit here belongs to the late Secretary of State for Northern Ireland "Mo" Mowlam. It was she, who at great risk to her own political future if not her personal safety, called on the hard men at the Maze and convinced them to support the ongoing process or at least not overtly oppose it with a campaign of violence. This was a watershed event in the process. Mo's name is not even mentioned in Father Helmick's article.

I am also hard pressed to understand how anyone who purports to be knowledgeable about Northern Ireland and the peace process would not even mention the two men who won the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts, John Hume and David Trimble (both of whom have received honorary degrees from Regis). While they would be the first to recognize the efforts of many from their respective constituencies, John Hume and David (now Lord) Trimble were the essential leaders from the Northern Ireland political parties who made the Good Friday Agreement happen.

It is an injustice to ignore the contributions of these three individuals and to claim that "pioneer work" was done by "hard men who first constructed the possibilities of peace in prison."

Sincerely yours,

James M. Lyons,
Denver, CO

Spirituality and Psychotherapy

Thomas C. Barrett, Ph.D.



Over the past two decades, a subtle but profound shift has been occurring in how psychologists conceptualize and respond to the painful experiences our patients share with us in psychotherapy. You could almost say that psychology is finally “getting it” after over a hundred years of being in denial. With rare exceptions (e.g. William James, Carl Jung, Viktor Frankl, etc.), twentieth century psychological thought was characterized by a kind of knee-jerk, dysfunctional, conditioned animosity toward all things religious or spiritual. But with the new millennium, psychologists seem to be opening their minds and consulting rooms to a fairly radical concept. The biopsychosocial model is being replaced with a biopsychosocial-spiritual model. That is, many psychologists are now agreeing that our patients are in fact spiritual beings and that psychotherapy is inherently a spiritual endeavor.

In this article, I’d like to review some of the reasons for this shift in psychologists’ attitudes toward spirituality. I’ll then discuss a few ways in which spirituality can affect psychotherapy and how the patient’s spiritual beliefs can be ethically addressed in treatment. Finally, I’d like to conclude with a brief comment about what the future may hold for the practice of spiritually sensitive psychotherapy.

Spirituality is at the core of human identity and the heart of our capacity for courage and resilience.

The recent positive shift in how we think about our patients' spirituality certainly reflects what James, Jung, and Frankl saw long ago. Spirituality is at the core of human identity and the heart of our capacity for courage and resilience. Nevertheless, while basic psychospiritual concepts may be familiar, we've never before seen them illuminated quite so brightly. Consider that the American Psychological Association will soon be unveiling a new journal entitled *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* which will be the official journal of APA's Division 36 (Psychology of Religion). What's more, we can now view APA-produced DVDs featuring such distinguished psychologists as P. Scott Richards, Ph.D., and Edward P. Shafranske, Ph.D., performing spiritually sensitive psychotherapy and discussing how their patients' spiritual and religious beliefs can be supported during treatment rather than pathologized.

PSYCHOLOGISTS FACING FACTS

Part of the shift in attitude toward spirituality is probably related to psychologists finally facing facts. Our society is remarkably religious as indicated by surveys suggesting that, for the past fifty years or so, at least 90% of Americans have consistently professed a belief in God or a higher power. Indeed, most people say they pray and most report praying on a daily basis. Similarly, over half of Americans report attending religious services at least once a month or more, an attendance rate that has been stable for the past few

decades. Given this strong theme of spiritual values in the society from which they emerge, it's little wonder that spirituality is central to the identity of many psychotherapy patients. The psychologist who ignores or, worse, demeans their spirituality clearly risks undermining the very therapeutic relationship considered critical for positive psychotherapy outcomes.

At the same time, psychologists are increasingly aware of the vital role spirituality can play in helping people bear the weight of their personal anguish. It's becoming abundantly clear that spiritually committed people seem to have higher degrees of happiness and life satisfaction, and lower levels of substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. Indeed, recent research has led psychologists to recognize that an important indicator of a high risk of suicidal behavior in any given individual is whether that person has a sense of purpose in life. Of course, purpose in life, as Frankl observed after surviving the horrors of the Auschwitz concentration camp, is associated with our spiritual natures and our capacity for self-transcendence. At the same time, there is research suggesting that attendance at church or religious services does seem to be associated with a lowering of all-cause mortality levels. In this regard, there may be as much as a 25% reduction in risk after adjustment for established risk/protective factors such as healthy lifestyle, social support, and depression.

Finally, the American Psychological Association recently released *Stress in America*, a survey which found, perhaps as we would expect, that Americans, especially women, are getting more stressed and anxious about such issues as money, the economy, and work. At the same time, while 52% of Americans say they listen to music and 47% say they exercise or walk to manage their stress, 37% say they pray and 21% say they go to church or religious services. Meanwhile, 18% say they drink alcohol, while 7% say they see a mental health professional. But when individuals who say they use a particular stress management strategy are asked to rate its effectiveness, the two activities rated most effective were praying (77%) and going to church or religious services (75%). Compare these ratings with the effectiveness ratings of exercise or walking (65%), seeing a mental health professional (61%), listening to music (54%), and reading (50%). Findings such as these lend weight to

one idea that spirituality is significantly associated with psychological resilience, at least for many people. For psychologists who perceive psychological and spiritual development as just two different sides of the same coin, it's quite natural to assert that patients should feel free to discuss their spiritual beliefs in psychotherapy if they wish to do so.

SPIRITUALITY AFFECTS PSYCHOTHERAPY

Having slowly but surely come to see the relevance of spirituality in the treatment of many patients, psychologists who wish to be spiritually sensitive are faced with two related tasks. First, we have to recognize how spirituality can affect psychotherapy. Second, we have to find ways to address spirituality in the treatment process without violating basic ethical imperatives. Kenneth I. Pargament, Ph.D., in his 2007 book entitled *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*, has exhaustively explored how spirituality can be ethically and effectively integrated into psychotherapy. I'd like to adapt some of his ideas to convey a sense of the different ways spirituality can enter the consulting room and be addressed in an ethically appropriate manner. But for those wishing a more in-depth understanding of these issues, his book is an ideal resource.

Therapeutic Strength and Courage

First, psychotherapists frequently see patients for whom spirituality is an essential component of their identity, including their conscious awareness of who they are and what life is all about. These individuals inevitably bring their spirituality with them when they walk in the door, and their spirituality can frequently serve as a source of therapeutic strength and courage as they face the seemingly overwhelming problems motivating them to seek treatment. These patients might engage in one or more of several types of spiritual coping. On the one hand, they may attempt to discover a spiritual meaning in their suffering, developing a positive spiritual assessment for an otherwise negative situation. Thus, they may see their pain as a spiritual test and an opportunity to develop spiritual depth and insight. What they face is not accidental or arbitrary; their experience has a purpose,

Spirituality can frequently serve as a source of therapeutic strength and courage.

a meaning, and they will be better for having endured it if they endure it well. On the other hand, patients pursuing spiritual coping may pray for guidance and strength. By opening themselves to their transcendent, they become allied with what is sacred for them. That sacred force then becomes a part of their identity, infusing them with a sense of direction and courage. In this manner, prayer can create a stronger and a more confident sense of self. Both a positive meaning to a painful experience and a sense of confidence or self-efficacy can be critical assets in attaining psychotherapeutic goals. In this sense, the patient's spiritual and religious beliefs at the initiation of treatment may provide a stable foundation for the personal and spiritual growth that follows.

As psychotherapy unfolds, the treatment process may directly address questions of a spiritual nature. Perhaps the patient has experienced a profound trauma or loss (e.g. the unexpected death of a spouse) that threatens the person's fundamental sense of the meaning of life. In a psychotherapy session in the early phases of treatment, we might hear the patient ask: "How could a just God do this to me?" or "How can God expect me to go on with my life after this?" Or perhaps a patient has become so worn down with chronic depression that life now seems devoid of any coherent meaning: "Why am I even here? Why doesn't God just take me and end this useless suffering?" What these clinical scenarios have in common is that the underlying issues are directly spiritual in nature. What's more, they imply a developmental quality to

the spiritual growth process roughly reflecting the developmental quality associated with the psychological growth process. Specifically, psychotherapy may lead patients to question their more self-absorbed, childlike conceptions of God and the meaning of life just as it may lead them to question their attitudes toward their parents and their fear of thinking independently. The upshot is that, as patients progress in their psychological development, they may also progress in their spiritual development, seeking new ways of understanding the transcendent and what their relationship with that transcendent will become. In this sense, psychotherapy can be spiritually transformative. My self-centered concept of who I am, based as it may be on having a certain possession or a certain external characteristic, evolves into a sense of self-as-transcendent, a sense of self as defined by more internal, enduring, and universal goals. Perhaps my suffering teaches me that life is not all about me and my latest focus. Perhaps my suffering teaches me that life is about my transcendent duty to use my gifts, to care for others, and in so doing to fulfill my destiny.

Spiritual Growth by Another Name

If psychotherapy can sometimes directly involve spiritual questions, certainly it can very frequently involve issues that are indirectly spiritual. On any given day in my work as a psychotherapist, I can see a man who recently discovered that the spouse he has worshipped for years has been unfaithful. Or I can see a woman who is living with the knowledge that she married an alcoholic after having been raised by one. I can, in back-to-back hours, see a depressed college student who is secretly cutting her arms and a middle-aged man who is crippled by anxiety attacks. What all these patients have in common is the fact that their psychological growth depends on their developing the very best in their human natures: forgiveness, courage, confidence, and faith. This is spiritual growth by another name. At the end of the day, successful psychotherapy depends on patients facing their particular issues and finding a way, with the therapist's help, to inspire or "in-spirit" self-transcendence, movement beyond what they previously thought possible for them in their unique situations. From where might the inspiration or motivation for this self-transcendence emerge?

William James, writing over a hundred years ago, sought to understand how the transcendent could impact an individual suffering in a particular situation. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, he described a process for connecting with the transcendent that Jung, Frankl, and probably many modern day psychotherapists would find intuitively valid. In James' view, we all have a sense of self, much of which is subconscious, and it is from this subconscious self, our soul, that we receive messages of true genius and power, messages that we perhaps receive into our subconscious from the transcendent. In James' phrasing, ". . .the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come. . ." (p. 441). This certainly is consistent with more modern notions (e.g. archetype, self-actualizing tendency, etc.) suggesting that we each have within us an element of the divine, a voice we may only hear in the dead of night that guides us to develop our potentialities, to find meaning in life, or just to not kill ourselves today. There is a spiritual core, a spiritual self, that promotes human resiliency and it is this resiliency, this ability to transcend, that perhaps reflects the presence of God. The self is the bridge between the anguished individual and the divine, and it is from the self, our internal gyroscope, that our inspired direction and determination emerges. So the angry and depressed young man, jilted by yet another lover, hears, even as he's throwing down the vodka and painkillers he hopes will end his suffering, a voice from within: "Don't throw it away." Fearful he may be too late, he reaches for the phone. This is psychospiritual growth in its most stark form.

A Spiritual Connection

A final way for spirituality to affect psychotherapy has more to do with the therapist than the patient. We therapists, like our patients, are at least unconsciously spiritual whether we like it or not. More importantly for the therapeutic process, there is inevitably a spiritual connection made in psychotherapy whether we like it or not. Of course, for many decades we've accepted the notion that, during psychotherapy, the patient and therapist interact and exert a remarkable psychological influence on each other. But just as spiritual development goes hand in hand with psychological development, so too the therapeutic

relationship involves a spiritual as well as a psychological connection. Pargament related that one writer referred to spiritually integrated psychotherapy as a process of "soul meeting" and "soul making" (p. 195). Psychotherapy is inevitably a spiritual enterprise and the therapist's spirituality, and degree of comfort or discomfort with spiritual matters generally, influences how he or she conceptualizes the patient's presenting complaint, the process of treatment, and the meaning of his or her work. I often ask graduate students if counseling is a business or a profession. I later explain that I would never refer a patient to a therapist whose goal was to operate a business. The all too likely outcome would be negative. Let me invite you to visualize a conversation between a man whose young son is dying from cancer and his therapist. The man asks his therapist what he thinks the meaning of his son's early death could be and his therapist, uncomfortable with the sudden religious-sounding turn in the conversation, nods his head and mentions that the man's insurance copayment has increased. What effect would the therapist's level of spiritual discomfort have on the patient's psychological and spiritual development?

AVOIDING ETHICAL PITFALLS

At this point in our discussion, it's time to change direction. We've looked at why spirituality is important in psychotherapy and we've discussed a few ways in which spirituality affects the treatment process. Now we come to the very sticky question of exactly how we can best work with spirituality in therapy. I say sticky because there are several significant ethical pitfalls that must be avoided. In any discussion of values and beliefs in psychotherapy, including spiritual, there is first and foremost the very real danger that the psychologist will impose his/her beliefs, attitudes, and values on the vulnerable patient. Psychotherapy is definitely not pastoral counseling wherein a patient may expect to receive religious education as part of the counseling process. Psychotherapy patients by and large probably don't expect any religious instruction, and any surreptitious efforts in that direction would likely not only be offensive to the patient but also to the profession. At the same time, as should be clear from our earlier discussion, imposing our personal antipathy to religion,

demeaning our patients' spiritual convictions, or pathologizing our patients' religious beliefs are all equally ethically bankrupt. In short, we as psychotherapists can't take advantage of our patients' vulnerability in order to make ourselves feel better, whether it be selling them on our idea of religion or selling them on our idea that religion is sickness. Psychotherapy is all about helping the patient to grow and develop using the patient's values, beliefs, and tools.

Another ethical imperative that underscores how we actually deal with spirituality in therapy is the universally acknowledged need for informed consent. Consistent with our desire not to impose our values and attitudes on our patients, we certainly can't impose any discussions of spiritual concepts on their therapy hours. Instead, we can alert our patients that it's perfectly permissible to discuss these issues if they so choose. Then, we let them decide if they want to walk through that door. For example, in the early phases of psychotherapy, as part of an overall evaluation of the patient's presenting complaint and history, I may ask if the patient is the type of person for whom religion and spirituality are important. If the patient answers with a clear no, I may conclude that spirituality is not a salient issue for this person and move on to another area of inquiry, never again raising the topic. But if the patient answers with a clear yes, I may ask follow-up questions about how religion and spirituality are important in the patient's life. Depending on the situation, the topic may then go on the therapeutic backburner. The door has been opened; the patient has been alerted that it's quite permissible to discuss his/her spiritual beliefs. Perhaps he/she will choose to do so in the future, perhaps not. The decision is largely up to the patient. If for some reason I do want to raise the topic again, I must first obtain the patient's permission ("Jane, we talked some weeks ago about the importance of your spiritual beliefs in your life. But we haven't mentioned them since and I was wondering if you ever thought your beliefs might be relevant to your struggles with anxiety. Do you think it might be a good idea to talk about your beliefs and how they might relate to your anxiety?"). Once again, a clear no would seal the deal. No informed consent, no discussion of spirituality.

There is a remarkable struggle going
on for the soul of psychotherapy.

NONDIRECTIVE AND DIRECTIVE STYLES

Actually, our discussion of informed consent dovetails nicely with the critical issue of the psychotherapist's style in addressing spirituality in psychotherapy. In general, therapists can adopt a more nondirective style, in which spirituality is addressed implicitly, or a more directive style in which spiritual and religious issues are addressed quite explicitly. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages, and much probably depends on the therapist's personal preferences and predilections for how to be a good therapist. In the more nondirective mode, the therapist almost never initiates any religious discussions. Instead, the patient decides the agenda to be discussed by identifying the issues of concern for him/her. If the patient initiates any discussion of spirituality, the therapist's attitude is one of warm, respectful openness. The goal is for the therapist to empathically enter into the patient's spiritual world, not to correct it. By empathically helping the patient to verbalize and understand his/her spiritual and religious beliefs, along with the feelings they may engender, the patient will be better able to make the vital connections necessary for spiritual growth. But there are few, if any, prescriptions for specific spiritual beliefs or actions, and the therapist avoids any premature confrontation that would only intensify the patient's shame or anxiety. In many therapeutic settings (e.g. mental health clinics), where a wide range of patients with disparate beliefs may be represented, a less intrusive nondirective style may

offer the advantage of being spiritually welcoming without running the danger of imposing the therapist's beliefs on the patient. At the same time, a therapist doesn't have to be particularly religious to employ a nondirective style in spiritually sensitive therapy. Consequently, it may provide a more acceptable orientation for more therapists in more settings.

While acknowledging the advantages of the nondirective style, clearly there are settings in which a more directive approach may be preferable. The directive approach is at the opposite end of the spectrum from the nondirective style. A directive therapist explicitly refers to religious and spiritual values in therapy, assessing for dysfunctional patterns of religious beliefs, and actively prescribing prayer, the reading of spiritual material, or a referral to a religious congregation. In the directive approach, the therapist may recommend religious meditation strategies, openly advocate for a process of forgiveness, or suggest a religious visualization to help a patient feel emotionally supported during a crisis period. Certainly, the directive approach runs the risk of therapist imposition of values. But that risk may seem more tolerable in limited situations where patient and therapist are known to have very similar religious values (e.g. where both belong to the same religious order) or where the patient has expressed very clear informed consent for a more directive spiritual style of therapy (e.g. specifically seeking psychotherapy from a Christian counselor or a therapist openly affiliated with another religious belief system).

Maybe a concrete example would be helpful in illustrating the difference between the two styles. Many years ago, I worked with a young woman who was suffering from a terminal illness. As she faced her anticipated death, she said that she wanted to talk about what her death meant for her. She added that her father and her boyfriend wouldn't allow her to talk about death, fearing such pessimistic talk would bring it on. She noted that she usually agreed it was best to live in hope; but she knew her time was coming and she wanted to think it through. I didn't say much during our sessions. It didn't seem necessary. I may have started us off with a simple "Can you tell me what it's like for you?" But she did most of the talking, explaining that she was very spiritual and that she felt her death was natural and inevitable. She added that she thought she would again see her sister who had

lied earlier, and that she wished her family would lighten up a little bit about the whole thing. As she expressed her thoughts and feelings, my job seemed to be to listen empathically, reflecting back to her the meaning of what I was hearing. She knew much more about her spirituality than I would ever learn and I felt no need to send her to church or to give her a reading list. By the end of our discussions, she seemed to be at some peace and I felt that I had witnessed a very brave woman spiritually prepare for death. To be that close to mortality helped confirm for me my own priorities in life and I now believe it was one of my most memorable experiences as a therapist, even though my contribution to the sessions was probably limited to knowing what not to say.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As we move further into the twenty-first century, there is a remarkable struggle going on for the soul of psychotherapy. On the one hand, proponents of a rigorous empirical scientific approach, perhaps encouraged by cost-driven managed care concerns, advocate for evidence-based practices as the new standard of care. These techniques do, by and large, efficiently (and less expensively) treat the patient's presenting problem. But psychotherapy then becomes a complex set of manualized techniques that work, not a process of human interaction that heals. On the other hand, we have the proponents of a more traditionally humanistic orientation for whom psychotherapy is still as much an art as a science. For these psychotherapists, the essence of their profession lies less in manualized techniques than in such intangible qualities as understanding, compassion, love, courage, and faith. It would seem at this point that spiritually sensitive psychotherapy may not be considered an evidence-based practice because, while the mental and physical health correlates of spirituality may be known, spirituality itself can't readily be operationally defined. At issue is whether psychotherapy in the future will be solely technique-driven or whether it may at some level be person (soul) centered, whether the principal criterion for effectiveness will be the reduction of

observable symptoms or the lifting of subjective despair. I don't know how the struggle will turn out, although I hope that psychologists will take a middle road and try to preserve the best of both options. What I do know is that the proponents of spiritually sensitive therapy have fought long and hard to bring spirituality to the surface in our discussion of emotional healing. Now that it's here, I believe it's here to stay. Certainly, when I talk with graduate students about these issues, they frequently seem to form an immediate, intuitive "Of course!" connection. My best guess is that psychotherapy in the years to come is going to be a whole lot more meaningful and uplifting than anything we've seen thus far.

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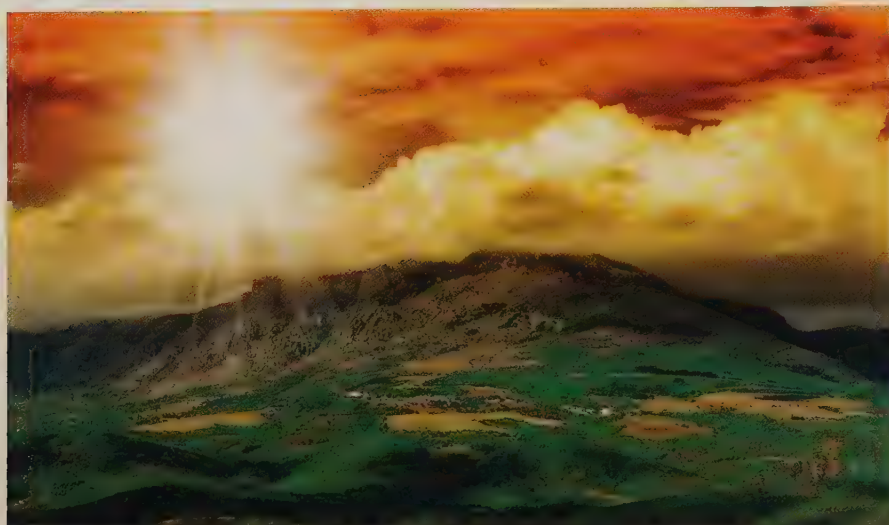
CAUSE FOR HOPE AND CONCERN

A Commentary on the Vatican Statement, "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood."

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The recent Vatican document entitled, "Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood" (hereafter, Guidelines) approved by Pope Benedict XVI and signed by Cardinal Zeon Grocholewski, Archbishop Jean-Louis Brugues, O.P., and Fr. Carlo Bresciani offers vocation directors, formators, seminary administrators, and psychologists clear hope and direction, as well as some challenging and rather perplexing dilemmas. The press coverage of this document failed to mention the extraordinary nature of its content. The role that psychology can rightfully claim in the admission and formation process of seminarians in the Roman Catholic church was not addressed.

In this commentary, we hope to point out aspects of the document that we find hopeful and to explore what they might mean. We will also attempt to point out some dilemmas or questions that face the candidates, seminarians, admission committees, formation team/faculty, and bishops. The document attempts to draw clearer boundaries for the proper use of psychology, and we add our perspective as a director of an assessment and treatment center for clergy and religious, and as psychologists.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Publication of the Guidelines by the Vatican is noteworthy and important. The Guidelines themselves clearly recognize the need for psychology, a critically important step in the right direction. The document rightly affirms that a vocation and its formation is not primarily a "psychological" task. Without question, the document sees seminary training, the discernment process, the decision to ordain a candidate and the formation process itself as essentially spiritual tasks. This point is clearly stated as "the importance of divine grace in the formation of candidates to the priesthood."

However, the Guidelines require formators to understand and apply psychology in a "proper" way. It also extols the merit of psychologists appreciating and understanding the uniqueness of Catholic anthropology and the "socio-cultural" context from which the candidate comes, as well as the one he is about to enter. This contextual drama, properly understood, underlies the admission process and seminary formation today. It points out the interdisciplinary nature of the task at hand. At the same time, the Guidelines point to the particular and sometimes necessary role of psychology in the formation process today. This is an extraordinary and exceptionally important point for formators. The Guidelines expect an interdisciplinary, mutual and ongoing dialogue between formators and expert psychologists (Par. 4-6, 7a, 9).

Thus, every formator must be prepared, including by means of specific courses, to understand profoundly the human person as well as the demands of his formation to the ordained ministry. To that end, much advantage can be derived from meeting experts in the psychological sciences, to compare notes and obtain clarification on some specific issues (Par. 4).

Inasmuch as it is the fruit of a particular gift of God, the vocation to the priesthood and its discernment lie outside the strict competence of psychology. Nevertheless, in some cases recourse to experts in the psychological sciences can be useful. It can allow a more sure evaluation of the candidate's psychic state; it can help evaluate his human dispositions for responding to the divine call; and it can provide some extra assistance for the candidate's human growth (Par. 5).

Who could have imagined the Vatican extolling the merits of psychology when one considers the long

history of antipathy between religion and psychology? Additionally, who could have imagined the more recent explosion of psychological research on the benefits of a healthy spirituality? These realities point to a new and possibly dynamic era of constructive dialogue.

The overarching emphasis of the initial text in the Guidelines is quite philosophical and theological. This might need some translation for psychologists unfamiliar with its Catholic context and culture. It clearly indicts a society and culture that does not value spirituality, relationships, celibacy, a chaste life, the centrality of service and the work of justice. Individualism, materialism and relativism are specifically indicted. The influence of these factors on any prospective candidate needs further elaboration and explanation if any psychological assessment is to be culturally significant, as this document requires. Many assessment psychologists who might potentially assist in the evaluation of candidates and their formation might neither understand nor appreciate the Catholic culture and context.

The document suggests that the candidate turn away from the cultural self-centeredness of individualism, materialism and relativism, and urges him to explore healthier "Christ-like" or more Christian interpersonal relationships within Catholicism's unique anthropological framework. The psychologist often uses very different "measures" that do not address these issues. Nevertheless, many conceptualizations and measures of interpersonal relationships and the concept of self and other in psychology incorporate many of the positive virtues valued by the church.

Additionally, we believe the Guidelines ascribe a new task to psychology: investigating in a more profound way whether and to what degree the candidate has attained the special interpersonal skills and sensitivity necessary to be a priest. Does the candidate have the capacity "to love chastely, to form relationships appropriately, a sense of freedom; does the person possess a sense of belonging and collaboration?" These are some of the capacities the document mentions. If we interpret the Guidelines correctly, standard assessments might require much more collateral data from multiple sources so that these interpersonal and affective capacities can be judged, and in this way addressing the critical

'socio-cultural' concern and context. Psychology does have measures that evaluate empathy as well as altruism, understanding others, maturity, emotional intelligence, and techniques that help to clarify self-image, aspirations, and input from others. The optimal application of these assessment tools entails using them in a prescriptive manner. By identifying and communicating potential weaknesses and self-defeating characteristics to the seminarian, he can focus on them in his self-development during preparation for the priesthood.

The Guidelines are definitely a positive step because they delineate some of the parameters for the interface between seminary formators and psychological experts. The document is to be commended for acknowledging the crucial role that the psychological and social sciences play in the discernment and formation of candidates to the priesthood. It provides specific and practical guidelines for this type of interdisciplinary collaboration and consultation. It has a stunningly integrative and holistic focus that should not be lost or diminished.

Some aspects of the clear use of psychology include the following:

1. Assessment is recommended for candidates seeking admission to the seminary and ordination (citing canon #1029-31).
2. Use of an expert psychologist and therapy in the seminary process when the need is demonstrated.
3. The need to separate a spiritual director's role from a therapist's role.
4. Citing *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the 'human dimension' underlies all of the pillars of formation and is the foundation of all formation: "the formators must know how to evaluate the person in his totality, not forgetting the gradual nature of development" (Par. 3). Human development and the importance of understanding is

central to formation in the Guidelines. Dialogue is also encouraged with experts in the psychological sciences.

5. The document even recommends that there be no psychologists on the formation staff to avoid confusion of the roles of the faculty and staff from that of a therapist.

RELATED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

We believe that the Guidelines relate to the spirit of the times and the contemporary climate of crisis in the church. They come at a time when the church clearly *needs and seeks* the expertise of the social sciences. Psychology, and especially personality assessment, has developed some sophisticated models, theories, and measurement instruments that can be creatively and suitably used by vocation directors and seminary formators. The document calls for the examination of psychological theories and models to see how grounded they are in a Christian anthropology. It is necessary for the psychologist to grasp that anthropology is rooted in an ecclesiology. Vocations exist and are derived "from" the church and her mediation, find fulfillment "in" the church, and in fundamental service to God, as a service "to" the Church" (c.f. Par. 1). This view is an ecclesial and communal view that warrants insight, grace, and "protection" in the same community. Assessments are necessary as a service to this same community of believers at this particular *kairos* moment in our history.

These assessments can help identify problems that often lead to the development of certain abusive behaviors, so that these individuals can be screened out. However, the science of psychology cannot definitely protect any community, whether medical, academic, or ecclesial, from a predator. There are many aspects of a person including "one's affective maturity and the absence of mental disorders" or "personality." According to the Guidelines, a person's make-up and history are factors that together can tend to lead into sexual misconduct, either creating potentially offending situations or actual offending behaviors. Furthermore, the Guidelines point to the necessarily

interpersonal demands on the candidate to the priesthood. The document also alludes, though in a vague fashion, to the reality that a person may develop problems along the way. Rectors and spiritual directors see this often. Problems that a candidate or seminarian thought they had dealt with long ago arise when they least desire them, or under times of stress and transition. Internal and external conflicts that they never knew existed become important to understand. If these remain unresolved, the rector or seminary staff put the people of God at risk.

SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The issues of specific assessment and psychological problems are named in the Guidelines. When a psychologist reads the document, one cannot fail to notice the ethical and professional implications for our field. It is helpful to name some of the potential challenges that psychologists will encounter.

Linguistic and Conceptualization Problems

The document explains and defines some psychological concepts incompletely and idiosyncratically. For instance, a personality is defined as “affective maturity and absence of mental disorder” (Par. 2). Such a characterization might refer to an important aspect of an “optimal personality,” but would not comprehensively summarize personality. The terminology of “the absence of” is vague and subject to misinterpretation. One would have to stretch many of the personality theories (psychodynamic, behavioral, social, trait, etc.) covered in introductory psychology courses to conceptualize personality in such terms. A clearer and more comprehensive definition of personality might help both formators and psychologists agree on the particular concerns and issues that are at hand. Catholicism’s unique anthropology, with its psychological nuances and features, requires a clearer definition of personality and its optimal representation in the seminary, so that proper assessment of it can be made during psychological testing.

Additionally, the assessment and evaluation of a candidate occurs in a developmental context, so that initially the “personality” is not fully formed and is subject to further growth. Admission to seminary should and does require psychological assessment. The age of the candidate at entrance to the seminary might necessitate further evaluations to better assess the effects of a seminary or formation program. In most cases, formation adds to the healthy development of one’s vocation with its incumbent capacities, talents and skills. But in other cases, it can cause unrecognized or hidden regressive and maladaptive features to arise in the person. Such problematic potentials might not fully emerge in a classic personality assessment because they are situationally based and subject to misrepresentation by the candidate (impression management). Repeated evaluations might be necessary; one is needed at entrance to the seminary or novitiate, another might be necessary at entrance to theology or prior to ordination.

Furthermore, these linguistic and conceptual issues seem to lead to more questions than answers. In the Guidelines, Section A—Initial Discernment, and Section B—Subsequent Formation, provide a list of several issues identified as “psychological problems” that could be “diagnosed” or identified by psychologists:

- affective dependency
- disproportionate aggression
- insufficient capacity for establishing serene relations of openness
- trust and fraternal collaboration as well as the ability to collaborate with authority
- a sexual identity that is confused or not yet well defined.

How do we diagnose and evaluate these problems? Is affective dependency the same or different from interpersonal dependency? Is this dependency, or addiction? Is there such a thing as a “proportionate” aggression? What is a “serene” relationship? There seems to be an overemphasis on interpersonal problems conceptualized from a

primarily psychodynamic or more abstract perspective. This seems odd when one considers the anthropological differences in the perspectives of the self and that of the church. Nothing is wrong with this perspective, but how does the church or any similar organization operationally define these constructs? This is something of a rhetorical question, because these really cannot be easily defined and agreed upon. These are abstract characteristics that need to be defined and discussed further. Such delineation is key to the ongoing and necessary dialogue between the church and psychologists. Whether in their optimal state (leadership) or their problematic state (pathology), those familiar with these issues in formation and psychological assessment are encouraged to engage in more healthy and fruitful dialogue.

There is a second list of problems that need to be evaluated and monitored in subsequent formation:

- affective dependency
- notable lack of freedom in relations
- excessive rigidity of character
- lack of loyalty
- uncertain sexual identity
- deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

How does a psychologist go about diagnosing “lack of loyalty”? Or better yet, “deep-seated homosexual tendencies”? Even if one could diagnose “deep-seated homosexual tendencies,” what does a psychologist who adheres to American Psychological Association ethical codes do with this information? Can a psychologist ethically integrate this information into a report knowing what the seminary admitting committee will do with this information? Has the candidate been *fully informed* as to the implications of identifying him as homosexual? Has the vocation and/or seminary team fully explained the position of the church, diocese or religious order?

In any case, it is doubtful that a psychologist would be able to identify “deep-seated homosexual tendencies.” The focus on uncovering hidden and

denied characteristics is both antithetical and perhaps inconsistent with the overall attitude and approach used in most psychological assessments. A better concern would be to look for the potential for impulsive sexual behavior of any kind. At times, professional ethics and scientific limitations may lead to psychologists not being able or willing to address certain questions. How should this be handled?

As we mentioned, if one accepts the developmental model, when does development end and ongoing formation begin? What are the criteria for these distinctions? Psychologists would assert that development, growth and maturation occur at all stages in life, albeit a little more slowly in adulthood.

On a positive note, the document does explore and explain the fact that candidates need to give their full and informed consent for the psychological evaluation to happen and for the information to be exchanged between the candidate, the evaluator, the diocese or the team designated by the consent form. This fact might need more explanation and care to guarantee that only those individuals mentioned in the consent form actually have access to the details of the psychological report and possible treatment. Additional clarity might also be necessary to cover how to protect these evaluations and this information once it is gathered. Psychology can assist the church in implementing professional standards of care for documentation and the retention of records. There are other feedback models, which would include discussion and working over findings, with options for different types of reports for different audiences. Screening evaluations, for example, might be communicated differently than self-enhancement consultations.

Ethical Questions and Standard Psychological Practice

The Guidelines raise several psychological concerns from the perspective of the formators. The document acknowledges some personality dynamics and individual differences that are very important in personality assessment. For example, the document addresses issues related to what we know variously as “social desirability,” “biased response style,” and “deception.” It states:

Nor must it be forgotten that there is a possible tendency of some candidates to minimize or deny their own weaknesses. Such candidates do not speak to the formators about some of their difficulties, as they fear they will not be understood or accepted. Thus they nurture barely realized expectations with respect to their own future. On the other hand there are candidates who tend to emphasize their own difficulties, considering them insurmountable obstacles on their vocational journey (Par. 8).

There is a considerable amount of psychological research on these issues, for example, on "impression management." To a certain extent, presenting the best of yourself in job interviews and vocational settings is normative and healthy behavior and is not deceptive or lying." Where do we draw the line, however? Further, what in the situation fosters or inhibits such behavior? For example, as therapists we know that even clients who come willingly to therapy and pay for it will often present themselves as quite well when in reality they are suffering enormously. We all want to present some aspects of ourselves in the best light possible even when we freely choose to go to therapy. This same dynamic is at work during a priestly formation program in a seminary. The paradox is that one's motivation to enter the priesthood might serve the self-defeating purpose of denying weaknesses, so that they go unattended during formation. Alternatively, we know for example, that characterological denial of vulnerability and sensitivity, which might masquerade as psychological health, is associated with rigidity, stressed reactions, and, in some, episodes of behavioral dyscontrol.

Deception and its antithesis, inner freedom, are also areas of concern. Internal needs and perceived external demands in a situation such as a seminary can be so powerful that candidates might act in a way that they think the authority figure desires, in effect, deceiving them (a conscious act), or suppressing their own expression of inner freedom (an unconscious act). Understanding and evaluating the various

presentations of deception is crucial in assessment and in the formation process to maximize the positive effects of authority on the actions and behaviors of seminarians and candidates. Admissions of the newly ordained to treatment centers might be linked to this phenomenon and the insufficient appreciation of these demands in the assessment and formation process. Experience with these more recent admissions of newly ordained priests suggests that they seem to be steeped in self- and situational-deception and "managing impressions" of others.

At what point does the normal psychological experience of presenting oneself in a good light become a liability? Let's say one administers the MMPI-2 (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Version II) to a seminarian and one notes that the K corrected scale was relatively high (suggesting defensiveness) and the L scale (assessing the way a person presents self) was also relatively high. (It is important to note that in some cultural populations "airing your dirty laundry" in public is not only socially undesirable, but culturally proscribed.) If a psychologist integrates these findings in the report, is the applicant to the seminary then rejected, or are the limitations associated with these issues identified as an area of internal review, reflection and growth? What are the implications of these psychological findings? What are the ethical implications? How do we appreciate the fact that such false positive presentations are variable across culture and nation?

SCOPE OF COMPETENCE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONSULTATION

Paragraph 5 is clear when it says that "the vocation to the priesthood and its discernment *lie outside the strict competence of psychology*." Regarding seminary formators and their use of psychology, it states, "the use of specialist psychological or psychotherapeutic techniques must be avoided *by the formators*" (emphasis added). The Guidelines fail to provide a clear frame of reference defining the scope of competence of the formator. This lack of clarity can lead to more confusion and more misinterpretation. The fields of expertise are clearly delineated; however, the practical consequences of these delineations need more specificity for both formators and any consulting psychologist.

The Guidelines state:

Right from the moment when the candidate presents himself for admission to the seminary, the formator needs to be able to comprehend his personality; potentialities; dispositions; and the types of any psychological wounds, evaluating their nature and intensity. . . . The assistance of experts can be useful . . . when evaluating whether it is possible for the candidate to live the charism of celibacy in faithfulness and joy as a total gift of his life in the image of Christ (Par. 8).

This section of the Guidelines makes the assumption that a cross-sectional snapshot of the candidate's personality will conclusively and accurately predict and describe the individual's future behavior and psychological functioning. Alternatively, it suggests that the formator can achieve a deep and assured understanding of the candidate quickly, without guesswork and speculation. Such accuracy and comprehensiveness is only attainable over time. A longitudinal and recurrent evaluation of the candidate's psychological functioning is necessary; one evaluation will not do it.

It has been said that psychology is quite good at *post-diction* but very lacking in *prediction*. This straightforward assertion belies the complexity of the task, however. Human behavior is extremely complex and the human person continues to be an elusive mystery that often transcends the reductionistic and empiricist attempts of psychological measurement (Epstein, 1983; Wiggins, 1973). Such complexity is especially true in vocational discernment and the identification of psychological problems in candidates to the priesthood. To ascertain whether a candidate will be able "to live the charism of celibacy," for example, one must be able to measure its predictors (Kraus, 1995). How do psychologists identify early predictors in applicants to the seminary? What is the viability and role of psychology in accurately and reliably assessing psychological problems in seminary settings? Are the Guidelines realistically hoping that a cross-sectional evaluation will maximize prediction? The question remains: how can this be done? The Guidelines state:

The church, "begetter and formator of vocations," has the duty of discerning a vocation and the suitability of candidates for the priestly ministry. In fact, "the interior call of the Spirit needs to be recognized as the authentic call of the bishops" (Par. 1).

Keep in mind that these experts (psychologists) in addition to being distinguished for their sound and spiritual maturity, also must be inspired by an anthropology that openly shares the Christian vision of the human person and sexuality, as well as the vocation to the priesthood and celibacy. In this way their interventions may take into account the mystery of humanity's dialogue with God, according to the vision of the church (Par. 6).

The Guidelines explicitly attribute the source of one's vocation to God and further define the church as the "begetter and formator of vocations." They highlight the Christological dimension of the vocation as a gift to increase the kingdom of God. This theological understanding of vocation drastically differs from the psychological theories of vocation and career development conceptualized by psychologists. The Guidelines' understanding of the experience of vocation seems to be couched in mystery. One wonders if this actually convolutes the experience so that those discerning their vocation are led to believe it is more mystical than it needs to be (Butler, 2005).

Although relatively secular and individualistic, most psychological vocational theories demystify the vocational decision-making process and emphasize the mental, materialistic (time and money resources) and individual-focused factors that contribute to the awareness and development of one's vocational commitment and competence. Some vocational theories have strong psychometric roots, as in the case of Holland's Self-Directed Search (Spokane & Cruza, 2005). Others are broadly based in developmental psychology, for example, Super's Life Career Rainbow.

and some emphasize the person's attributes, e.g., Bandura's Self-Efficacy in vocational and career aspirations. Multiple vocational instruments have resulted from these theories and they are widely used by vocational counselors. From a psychological perspective on vocation, a priority need is to integrate the theological and spiritual conceptualization of the church, the interests and competences of the candidate, and the psychological constructs and tools of vocational measurement.

A logical extension of current vocational theories would be to develop a comprehensive multicultural model of Catholic vocational discernment. Additional priorities include:

1. International consultation with cross-cultural and indigenous psychologists familiar with both Catholic and culture-specific vocational perspectives.
2. Further collaboration with seminary formators in different cultural contexts.
3. Systematic comparisons of the personality concepts relevant to vocational discernment derived from multicultural collaboration.
4. Intra-national studies assessing the implementation of the practical components of the Guidelines.

There is a need to integrate theological and psychological conceptualizations of vocation.

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

This is the area where the document is the most lacking and makes several unsupported or implausible assumptions. It maintains a "Euro-centric" and "Anglo-centric" perspective and bias. The section that can be commended, however, is Par. 7 where it says: "...different countries will have to regulate the recourse to experts in the psychological sciences in their respective *rationis institutionis sacerdotalis*."

There is a need to integrate theological and psychological conceptualizations of vocation.

This clause assumes incorrectly that most countries have access to experts and psychological knowledge. In some countries psychology is stigmatized and almost nonexistent, psychological services are organized quite differently, or are relatively inaccessible. Additionally, assessment instruments are typically produced in languages with national rather than international databases so that instruments may not be available, validated or widely used in certain countries. In many countries, it is psychology "Made in the USA" with psychologists or experts using American models of personality assessment imported (or more accurately imposed) on populations for whom they were not constructed. More recognition of such limitations and the importance of language and culture would make the *Guidelines* more applicable to the international and multicultural mission of the church.

This is especially important as the number of Hispanic candidates and seminarians increases in the U.S. They number almost fifteen percent (15%) of the clerical population. It becomes even more challenging as the church imports more international priests from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Philippines to fill the ever-increasing priest shortage. The church in the U.S. is in danger of experiencing more sexual abuse cases unless we quickly obtain culturally appropriate norms for psychological tests to be applied to international priests. The fact that international priests reportedly perpetrated 6 out of 12 recent sexual abuse cases by Catholic clergy in the United States highlights this immediate need.

CONCLUSION

Our initial reaction to this analysis is that another, fuller, explanation and article might be necessary to sufficiently delineate fields of expertise and their implications. Specifically, delineation in the field of priestly vocational screening, priestly formation, seminaries, and psychology needs further attention and more careful explanation. As we have stated, this document does move the church and the field of psychology into a more collaborative and interdisciplinary discussion. Though we have pointed out some of the document's limitations, we also strongly affirm the positive and overall useful nature of the Guidelines. If the church is to fully utilize what psychology can offer to prevent abuse and to maximize contributions of future priests, it may want to consider supporting longitudinal research to identify what precursors during seminary formation predict optimal and problematic outcomes in the priesthood.

We firmly hope that these comments might assist us all in conversation and dialogue over the critical spiritual, pastoral, intellectual, and human pillars that create the priest of tomorrow. To that end, this document clearly points us to a more collaborative effort between psychologists and formators.

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THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

in the Experience of Addiction and Recovery

Reverend Michael J.K. Fuller, S.T.D.



I must begin by saying that I am not a recovering alcoholic. I say this by sheer grace—for I know in my heart that I am wired in such a way that I could easily become addicted to alcohol or any number of things. I say this humbly because I can tell you precisely when God's grace first intervened and helped me to avoid that path.

My father drank all of my life—he had been drinking since he was a teenager—but he was a quiet drunk. He would simply spend a lot of time sleeping. My brother and I never really saw dad drinking except socially, when people would be over. His preferred poison, as he would later call it, was vodka. This was because it was clear and looked like water, and so he could drink it at work, or even at home, and no one would be the wiser. In my sophomore year in high school the family peace was finally disturbed. Fights with my mother, missed appointments, slip ups at work, and a great decline in health all led to our realizing that dad had a drinking problem.

It was at this time that a particular movement of grace came to me. For one reason or another, I became interested in family history. I never met my mother's parents, for they both died by the time she was thirteen. My dad's father was also deceased long before I came on the scene. Not that it would have mattered much as my grandparents were divorced. But I became curious about this bunch. I remember asking grandma about why they divorced. I believe her exact words were, "Michael, he was a good-for-nothing drunk who drank himself to an early grave."

Going back another generation, I asked my father's brother, Uncle Al, what he remembers about his grandfather, my great-grandfather, and it brought another piece to the puzzle. "Grandpa Al," he said, "he was always out of it—a drinker."

In my genealogical research, I managed to find the death certificates of my grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. The cause of death for all three was identical: cirrhosis of the liver. Seeing that was the moment of grace. I knew right then and there that there was a deadly pattern that I had to avoid for the rest of my life.

I received this grace, this startling revelation, right around the time my dad went into treatment for the first time. I would like to say that I used this information as evidence that dad suffered from a disease and needed help, but instead, in my anger and hurt, I used it as my first piece of evidence to convict dad of being morally weak and from a long line of morally weak men. The grace of the information allowed me to never want to drink, but at first, it also made me the judge and jury against my father. I vowed to be the exception; I would prove to be morally better. This vow was reinforced a short time later when dad "fell off the wagon." He was out of treatment for a month or so, when we found him passed out in his office. I remember vividly my mom asking what we were to do, and my advising her to divorce him. But she was much stronger, and said that we needed to pray, to pray more.

A few weeks later, help did come. Mom and I found dad at the office, passed out again. We woke him, and he quickly fell into tears. We called his sponsor, a good friend from the parish. We all decided, right there, in a kind of intervention that we just stumbled into, that he needed to go back into treatment. This time to another facility that had a longer, tougher program. I still remember vividly dad sitting on his office couch, clutching a pillow. He finally agreed to go if he could take his pillow with him—a man clinging to anything that would give him some security.

I am immensely proud to say that Dad spent the last thirteen years of his life sober. At his funeral, ten years ago, the line for the visitation stretched all the way down Main Street. He was a popular man, the lone insurance agent in a small but growing town, and so had everyone as a client. But there were just as many people we did not know, who came because,

in one way or another, dad had helped them, through AA meetings, phone calls, and the like. The gift of recovery made my dad into a very gracious man, who did all he could to help others as he was helped.

It is, of course, a familiar story. It is the twelfth step, the continual lifelong step where the person recovering realizes that it is only in helping others that he too can stay sober. For me, as a proud son and a teacher of spirituality, what is important to understand about the spiritual journey is the operation and power of grace.

BILL W., DAD, AND SAINT PAUL

I was reading the story of Bill W. in the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*, and was struck by how similar his story was to my dad's. After my father died and we had to clean out his office, we found many, many half empty vodka bottles. He had them in such good hiding places that he couldn't even find them. It is a familiar story—Bill W. hid his bottles in the toilet tank and other places. A year ago my mother died and we found even more bottles, twenty-three years after dad went into recovery.

There are many other similarities between the stories of Bill W. and my dad, and the countless others who have suffered through this disease. But what struck me was the similarity between all these stories and the story of Saint Paul. The very words that Bill and others used to describe the moments of grace and healing echo those of Paul's conversion. Bill W. writes,

Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view (*Big Book*, 12).

Sounds familiar: "And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18).

Of course Bill W. deliberately uses religious words to describe his experience; he has to, for no other words will do. Earlier he wrote, "I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence." And a little later, "There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up. . ." (*Big Book*, 8, 14).

These are very similar to the words of Paul who was himself lifted up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2).

This was according to the eternal purpose which God has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him (Ephesians 3:11-12).

In Bill W.'s story, he talks about what I call the first stage of his recovery. He writes:

Best of all, I met a kind doctor who explained that though certainly selfish and foolish, I had been seriously ill, bodily and mentally. It relieved me somewhat to learn that in alcoholics the will is amazingly weakened when it comes to combating liquor, though it often remains strong in other respects. My incredible behavior in the face of a desperate desire to stop was explained. Understanding myself now, I fared forth in high hope.... Surely this was the answer-self-knowledge (*Big Book*, 7).

Of course, this self-knowledge was not enough; after three or four months, Bill W. was back to drinking again. But why wasn't the knowledge that he was seriously ill, bodily and mentally, not enough to cure him? Because, as we all know, it was only partial self-knowledge.

HUMILITY

Every spiritual writer worth his or her salt, from Saint Paul to Teresa of Avila to John of the Cross, describes the spiritual journey as beginning in the same place-humility. Humility is defined as self-knowledge, full self-knowledge where we know ourselves as we truly are-warts and all.

I did not know this until recently, when, in packing up my mother's things, I found a notebook in dad's old dresser. Dad wrote it when he was in treatment for the second time. Many lines have stayed

with me, but one stuck out in particular. It was early in the treatment and he was having a hard time. He wrote, "I can't fool these guys. In the other place, [the previous treatment center] I told them what I knew they wanted to hear, and they left me alone, but not here. I tell them, and they do not believe me. They tell me that I am only fooling myself."

It was only when he stopped fooling around, pretending to go along, that he actually began to see himself as he was. The pages that followed were full of sadness and grief. I couldn't even read them. They were full of anguish and pain that showed he finally saw himself as he truly was-in desperate need.

It is the same self-knowledge, the same humble beginning, which Bill W. experienced when the scales fell from his eyes. He described his experience at Winchester Cathedral back in the war years, where, for a brief moment, he needed and wanted God. He realized how desperately he needed something, someone, bigger than him (*Big Book*, 12).

It is the same revelation that Saint Paul experienced on that lonely road to Damascus centuries ago. All three experienced a radical shift in their self-perception, with Paul coming to realize that what he thought was God's work was actually just the opposite. For the other two, Bill W. and my father, it was a realization that all those years of thinking and trying to change on their own were in vain. This disease was beyond their ability to cure: "We admitted that we were powerless; that our lives had become unmanageable. We came to believe that only a Power greater than ourselves could restore us" (Step One).

Authentic humility is the beginning of each and every spiritual journey, whether it is for recovery or conversion from sin. It is authentic humility in that it is true knowledge of the self, and the need we all have for God, in whatever manner we wish to imagine God. Humility is not an attitude of "little old me, who is insignificant . . . pay no attention to me." Humility is, as Bill W. said, the conviction "that God is concerned with us." He knew it and felt it when he realized "that of myself I was nothing, that without Him I was lost" (*Big Book*, 12-13).

The spiritual journey does not end there. A lot of hard work, blood, sweat and tears lie ahead for both the addict and the saint-to-be. By definition, there can be no spiritual journey without some

form of asceticism. Fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and preaching all have to be practiced. Likewise the asceticism of making a moral inventory; admitting the exact nature of our wrongs to God, ourselves and another; making amends and asking God to remove our defects and shortcomings are all necessary steps.

Asceticism comes from the root word *askesis* and means training. A marathon runner does not simply go out and run twenty-six miles the first time out. It takes months and months of training and conditioning. The same is true for the spiritual journey of recovery, healing and restoration, for both the sinner and the saint. Saint Paul had many ascetical practices that trained him well, so he could say "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Both the spiritual journey of recovery and sanctity take a life-time to accomplish, so how does one maintain such asceticism? How does the recovering addict stay on course through all those steps? For that matter, how did Saint Paul go through three shipwrecks, countless whippings, exiles, arrests, tempests, and storms?

What else could it be but gratitude? Saint Paul writes to the Philippians about the great gift we all have been given. He then says, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (3:12).

I found a second notebook in dad's dresser. This notebook was remarkably different from the first one, and he must have written it later. The best way for me to describe the content of this second notebook is to say that the tears of pain and anguish had given way to tears of profound gratitude.

There were lists of things that he was obviously grateful for—things he did with mom over the years, and what my brother and I meant to him. My mom must have read it at one time, for stuffed within it were all the cards for holidays, anniversaries, and such that he had given her those last thirteen years. In each of them were just one or two lines saying how much he loved her, and how overwhelmed he was to have her as his wife. I can tell how grateful he was just by the way he wrote "I love you."

CONVERSION AND RECOVERY

What I am piecing together here is an answer to the question, why do we say that addiction is "an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer" (*Big Book*, 44)?

It is my contention that the spiritual journeys of a recovering addict and a saint, parallel each other very closely—because both of these journeys are initiated by grace, and not by the person.

Father John C. Ford, S.J., who taught at Weston College and was deeply involved in the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism (NCCA), once said, "There is nothing more striking than the blindness, blindness, blindness of an alcoholic to his own condition" (Clausen, 214). But blindness is not unique to the addict; it is a common trait of us all. Blindness truly described my dad; and it was the way Bill W. described himself. But blindness was also what Saint Paul suffered from even before that powerful light struck him on the road to Damascus. In his case, the blindness was far worse, for he did not suffer from any disease, but rather from the blindness of his own arrogance.

Blindness describes each one of us in the human race. And to cure this blindness, we need the grace of conversion. The Twelve Steps work, I firmly believe, because they mirror the same process of conversion that is found in all spiritual experiences, all the way back to the apostles themselves.

The Dominican biblical scholar Jerome Murphy-O'Connor outlines four key steps common to the experiences of the apostles in recognizing the resurrected Christ (Murphy-O'Connor, 72). Recognizing the resurrected Christ must be considered a process of conversion, for what more radical shift in understanding could there be than coming to know that Christ rose from the dead? One may ask why four steps for the apostles and twelve for the rest of us, and all I can say is that God must have sped up the process for the apostles, allowing them to minister to the rest of us.

The first step of coming to recognize the resurrection of Christ is the most crucial. First, the apostles had to acknowledge and fully accept the death of Jesus. This is the first step, the step of humility,

of self-knowledge; they had to see the world as it really was. Christ was dead.

Accepting the resurrection of Christ is a recognition of a need for healing that the apostles did not know they needed. Once they accepted it, however, they came to realize just how much the world needed the cure of Christ. This is seen in that great description of the early Church found in Acts where all are gathered around the apostles: "With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all" (4:33). The grace of conversion is the grace of restoration, healing and recovery from all the trials and tribulations that come from this fallen world and our fallen natures.

The agonizing and painful process of coming to grips with the truth is the same in the process of recovery. As Bill W., Dad, and countless others discovered, they all had to come to terms with the fact that they were in a situation that they could not manage, and could not control. Like the apostles immediately after the death of Jesus, they were powerless.

This is the same situation that every disciple, if he or she is truly to progress toward a deeper relationship with Christ, has to come to understand. We need the self-knowledge, the humility, to see that without the Lord, we are nothing. The recovering addict, like Bill W., has a profound sense of this encounter with his true self; and, in an ironic way, it gives the person in recovery an advantage over others. For many, this deep level of self-knowledge may never come; it may only be acknowledged with the same intellectual acceptance we give to a theorem in mathematics. But for the would-be saint and for the one in recovery, it is felt at the very core of one's being.

The second step in recognizing the resurrected Christ, or as I contend, the spiritual journey, comes, as Murphy-O'Connor puts it, with the intervention of Jesus. Simply put, the resurrected Jesus appeared to Mary, the apostles and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Talk about a higher power; this must be why the process was so quick for the apostles. It is hard to disbelieve that there is a power greater than you when that power shows up at your door.

But that should not distract us from the fact that the same thing occurs in the spiritual journey, especially

We need the self-knowledge, the humility, to see that without the Lord, we are nothing.

in the journey of recovery from addiction. The intervention of God might not be a full-blown apparition of the resurrected Christ, but the effects are just the same, if they do take a little longer to be seen.

The second time my dad was in treatment, the program called for some time with the family as a whole, to come together and learn about the disease of alcoholism and its impact on the family. I think this is one of the reasons this program actually worked. I came home from my freshman year in college to attend those sessions.

This is where we learned that each of us dealt with the problem in different ways and through different avenues of escape. Mom had some of the characteristics associated with co-dependency. My brother was the family clown, who used humor to keep things at a distance. He was also the one who went into long periods of isolation in his room, or out on the river that ran past our house. All the eyes of my family turned to me as the counselor discussed the characteristics of the family hero. At the time I thought that none of these models applied to me.

The family meeting was another experience of grace for me. This time, however, it was an intervention of grace that was far more humbling. I had to acknowledge that I was not above these problems, that I was not morally superior and unaffected by the disease. Rather it was just the opposite, my whole character, my whole sense of identity, was determined by it. I was not immune after all.

There can be no other response to grace
than what Teresa of Avila calls an
expansion of the heart.

The third step in this journey is that Jesus identifies himself. By letting them touch his hand and his side, and by the breaking of the bread, Jesus identified himself as the one whom they knew to be dead, but was now alive. For Saint Paul, it was a little different, in that Paul asked, "Who are you?" and Jesus replied "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5).

What, do you imagine, was the initial internal response of the apostles? Peter was already feeling terrible about his denial of Christ earlier. The others too, must have had a moment of guilt at their own running away. Paul was so overwhelmed that he was blinded, not just by the exterior light, but by the light of truth that he had persecuted this Christ who was appearing before him. The wounds they all made could be seen right in front of them—on the body of Jesus.

This happens to us all, does it not? In a religious experience where we come to know Christ and identify him as our Lord and savior, the most immediate, internal response is contrition. Our selfish and prideful ways have inflicted many wounds, and we are truly saddened by them. In recovery, this same internal response naturally comes when we identify our higher power; it motivates us to take the fourth and fifth steps. Addiction caused us to do many hurtful, shameful, terrible things. It is only by coming to grips with those things, and asking God to help us, that we can progress toward true health.

It is by the light of identifying that higher power that all this change can actually take place. This is the fourth step Murphy-O'Connor mentions: Jesus is recognized by the apostles. In other words, they come to full realization of all that had happened.

It is only after Thomas identified Jesus that he could go out and preach the good news. It is here that I am so proud of my father, for once he recognized his absolute need for God, his absolute dependency on grace, he never stopped trying to be an instrument of healing for others.

There can be no other response to grace than what Teresa of Avila calls an expansion of the heart (*Interior Castle* 4.1.5). We see this expansion in all the apostles who go out not just to preach the Good News, but to enact it. "The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem" we are told in Acts of the Apostles, "bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (5:16). We see this expansion of the heart in all the saints who, like Saint Francis, loved those who were outcast and marginalized. We see it in the person well on the spiritual path of recovery, who follows the twelfth step: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

THE OLD ADAGE

From the beginning, I believe, there has been this old adage within AA: "Religion is for those who do not want to go to hell, but spirituality is for those who have already been there." As I reflect on my father's life, this certainly rings true.

The spirituality of the twelve steps helps to remind all of us that what we are called to do is to follow the spiritual journey of the apostles. It is the journey and experience of grace that brings about recovery, healing for everyone. Or, as Flannery O'Connor describes in one of her letters, "The operation of the Church is entirely set up for the sinner, which creates much misunderstanding among the smug" (O'Connor, 945).

The spiritual awakening of the apostles to the resurrection of Christ brought about healing and the expansion of their hearts. Not only were they healed from the guilt arising from their previous behavior, but they were healed from the disorder all people feel as a result of our fallen nature. Instead of living in a constant state of anxiety, so famously described by the existential philosophers as *ennui* and *alienation*, the

apostles and disciples lived a life in accordance with how we were created to live—with hearts that actually have room for others.

In the spiritual awakening of the recovering addict, the same transformation is at work. Doctor Oliver Morgan of the University of Scranton has said that, "From the experience of many 'anonymous' programs [it] is clear that the primary struggle in addiction is not with alcohol, or heroin, or gambling, or compulsive sexing per se. Rather, the primary struggle is with 'self-will run riot' and 'self-centered fear.' Put another way, the issue here is the disordered self" (Morgan, 40).

Why is addiction considered an illness that only a spiritual experience can conquer? We call it a disease, which is far better than what we called it in the past—a failure of moral integrity or sin. But by calling it a disease we tend to lend our imaginations to some kind of scientific, medical cure. There is some truth and some recent progress to that assertion. But in my limited experience I know that the disease of addiction requires the involvement of the whole person—mind, body, and soul. For this reason, it requires a spiritual treatment, because the spiritual is the only dimension that encompasses the whole person.

Sister Maurice Doody quoted Carl Jung, who once described alcoholism as a "spiritual disease which has as its base a drive for wholeness" (Doody, 22). In truth, alcoholism is one version of the many spiritual diseases that afflict us.

The old Catholic notion of having "fallen natures" reflects this understanding; we are all incomplete and yearning to be made whole. This is why Bill W. used religious imagery in describing his experiences; this is why the Twelve Steps insist that this is a spiritual process. It explains why my father's experience is so similar to the conversion Saint Paul and the apostles experienced. Bill, Dad and Saint Paul are all beautiful demonstrations of the action of grace which brings healing, restoration, and the promise of wholeness. Being instruments of that grace is what the Church and the Twelve Steps are called to do.

The spiritual journey of the saint, the sinner, and the person in recovery, therefore, is one of life-long conversion. It is a journey that begins at some point when we come to an epiphany. We have an encounter

with the Lord, a power greater than ourselves, that gently, patiently, leads us through a path of self-knowledge, humble acceptance, gratitude, enlargement of the heart, and finally, at long last, oneness, unity with God and our brothers and sisters. The spiritual journey echoes quite well, I think, what Saint Paul told the Corinthians:

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:8-10).

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THE FIRST COMMANDMENT AND SANITY: *Faith Casts Out Fear*

William A. Barry, S.J.



This article is based on the keynote address given at the 59th Annual Convention of the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism and the Guest House Institute 4th Annual Winter Conference in Houston, Jan. 20, 2009. The theme of the convention was: Seeking God: Addiction, Spirituality and Recovery.

PREPARATIONS

When I look at the bare fields in winter, the sunflowers are there.
When I gaze at the sunflowers I see the scarred snowy fields.
This is how you tell you are ready to leave
this beautiful and deadly place,
depart
and return there,
annihilated,
healed.

While there is time
I call to mind Your constant unrequited
and preemptive forgiveness.

And remember You are not
and never were the object
of my thought,
my prayer,
my words

but rather I
was the object of Yours!

And I think I'm beginning to learn finally
what everything has been trying to teach me
just recently
again, and
for the past fifty years of forever:
total love for You-the mysterious gift of my life-
truly felt at each instant
and every day
of deepest recollection,
grace-filled apprehension, it would
dispel all fear, as well
as the love that requires a response-
from others, other
ghosts (or
even
You!)

And I have always failed, yet
always know IT was there-this utter love-
And so am ready with the speechless
universe all word
my company,
my light,
my sunflower. Dark morning thoughts-...

(Franz Wright, *God's Silence*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006, pp. 113-114.
Used with permission.)

From his poems I gather that Franz Wright knows the struggle with demons, and perhaps with the demon of addiction. But he has found God and thus a measure of peace and wholeness and élan for life, and even won a Pulitzer Prize for poetry. I want to claim in this article that he has become, what all of us human beings must become if we want really to live, namely a believer, someone who acts as though the first commandment were true.

Notice that this poem ends with the words "Dark morning thoughts..." It is winter, and he is looking out on a bleak landscape where the sunflowers are only there in hope. He goes there and is annihilated, he says, and healed. He remembers the truth that God is not the object of his thought or prayers, but that he is the object of God's thought. Like many of us, it seems, Wright has learned in the pit of darkness that we are never alone, nor without light, because God desires us into being, keeps us in being and will keep us in being forever. And that God does this, purely out of love and compassion, not for anything God can gain from us. Moreover, he has learned what all of us addicts have to learn or else wallow in the smell of our fear, namely that belief in and love of God casts out fear. In addition, he knows that each day we have to ask God to pick us up from the floor where our fears will keep us nailed, and that God will respond. Most of the themes of this article are touched in this moving and powerful poem.

GOD SEEKS US

Often enough we speak of seeking God. But our seeking of God rests on a deeper reality, namely that God is always seeking us. That's a point Wright makes when he says:

And remember You are not
and never were the object
of my thought,
my prayer,
my words
but rather I
was the object of Yours!

Here he is reiterating in other words what the First Letter of John says: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be

the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). We exist only because God desires us to exist, wants us; God's desire, God's wanting, creates us and keeps us in existence. We forget this basic truth at our peril. It is the basis of the First Commandment.

The Benedictine monk and spiritual writer Sebastian Moore notes that our desires are elicited by the existing beauty or attractiveness of something or someone. Something or someone is there for us to be attracted to. But with God it is totally different. We do not exist for God to be attracted to us. God's desire creates what God finds desirable. God's desire for us makes us, and makes us desirable to God. We exist only because of God's desire, and we will exist forever as the object of God's desire. God is always seeking us. And our desire for God is only the correlative of God's prior desire for us. So we seek God only because God first seeks us and in desiring us creates in us a desire for God.

This is the deepest meaning of the creation stories of the book of Genesis. God calls into existence everything that is "not God" out of generosity and abundant love. God does not need anything else to be happy; God does not create because of loneliness or any other need. Everything that exists exists only because God wants it to exist, not because it must exist. And everything that exists will continue to exist only as long as God wants it to exist. There is nothing any created person or thing can do to assure existence. Moreover, human beings are created in the image and likeness of God; hence, we are like God and will exist forever because God wants this. And because God wants human beings to live forever, somehow the created world will live forever since human beings are bodily creatures with ties to the whole universe. Moreover, Christians believe that God has become a human being with ties to the whole universe, another assurance that somehow or other the universe will last forever. This is what God wants; we have nothing to do with guaranteeing our existence or our likeness to God; that is God's doing. Again this is the meaning of the first commandment: "I am the Lord your God...you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2). Only God is God; everything else is created by God, and, therefore, dependent on God's desire.

The crazy thing is that what we have purely as gift we try to guarantee by our own efforts. We want to control things. One of the characters in the P.D. James

detective story, *Devices and Desires*, says: "We need, all of us, to be in control of our lives, and so we shrink them until they're small and mean enough so that we can feel in control" (1990, p. 248). This is the temptation described in chapter three of the book of Genesis. The serpent insinuates that God doesn't want us to live forever, doesn't want us to be like God. In effect, he says, "God doesn't want any rivals; that's why he doesn't want you to eat of the tree of good and evil. So if you eat of that tree, you can be like God and have control of your destiny." But, in reality, God wants us to be like God; God creates us in the divine image and likeness. And God wants us to live in friendship and cooperation with God forever. Addiction begins with the belief that we can control our existence through some means other than faith and trust in God. "A bite of that apple will make me whole," that belief says. And look at what happens when the first human beings take the bait; they become afraid of and hide from God and from one another. Before they tried to gain control of their lives, the story goes, they were naked and were unashamed; they were, we might say, totally transparent and unafraid before God and one another. But now they put on clothes and hide because they are afraid. Pretty soon they are killing and raping, engaging in endless warfare, and finally in chapter 11 of Genesis find themselves unable to communicate with one another at the tower of Babel. Crazy indeed.

So the first thing we need to get straight is that God loves us first, seeks us first. Any move toward God in love, or for that matter toward anyone else, is only possible because God loves us first, creates us by desiring us into being. The first commandment rests on this simple reality. God alone is God, the Holy One who creates for the sheer joy of it, out of abundance, not any need. We are not needed; but we are wanted by God. And, I believe, all God wants from us is our friendship. If we can ever get that straight, then we are on the road to living without fear in this world, living as the images of God we are created to be.

A personal story. Fourteen years ago when I was provincial of the New England province of the Jesuits I had cancer of the vocal cord which was treated by radiation. About a year later, after a particularly difficult meeting with a group in the province, I made my annual retreat. Needless to say, I was anxious and fearful at the beginning of the retreat. But I repeatedly heard God saying to me something like this, "I am God, and you are not. I don't need you; but

I do want you." One evening as I was out walking the thought flashed through my mind, "You could be dead now." It was true, and the recent cancer treatments had brought this home to me. I broke into a smile, almost a laugh, because of the mood of the retreat and what God had been saying to me during it. Almost immediately, I thought, "Someone else would be provincial, and the province would get along without your so-called leadership. So why are you worrying so much?" I was free of fear at that moment and for some time afterwards. But, of course, the experience gradually faded into the background, and my default of wanting to be in control has too often taken over, along with the return of fear, because, of course, trying to be in control is a hopeless task.

SEEKING GOD

The desire of God that creates us puts in us a correlative desire for God. Thus the deepest desire of the human heart is for union or friendship with God. Let me develop this notion now. We are made in the image and likeness of God; we are icons of God. Now I want you to reflect with me on the revelation that God is triune, three who are mysteriously one. Over the centuries Christians have tried to get a glimmer of understanding of this mystery of who God is. The best that theologians have been able to do is to say that in God there are three "persons" who are distinguished from one another by nothing but their relationship to one another. That is, they are three so in love with one another, so one with one another, that they are only one God. Within God, we can say, friendship reigns supreme. God is a perfect dance, three so perfectly in tune with one another that they are One. Now this God of perfect harmony and friendship creates and sustains the whole universe. As Ignatius of Loyola writes in his *Spiritual Exercises*: "I will consider how God dwells in creatures... I will consider how God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth" (Sp. Ex. 235-236). And this God who dwells in, labors in and works in all creatures is the Three-in-One Mystery of perfect friendship and harmony. So at the heart of the universe pulses the most amazingly beautiful harmonious dance.

The writer Frederick Buechner describes an experience of such a dance when he was at Sea World on a beautiful day as six killer whales were released into the tank:

What with the dazzle of the sky and sun, the beautiful young people on the platform, the soft southern air, and the crowds all around us watching the performance with a delight matched only by what seemed the delight of the performing whales, it was as if the whole creation—men and women and beasts and sun and water and earth and sky and, for all I know, God himself—was caught up in one great, jubilant dance of unimaginable beauty. And then, right in the midst of it, I was astonished to find that my eyes were filled with tears...

I believe there is no mystery about why we shed tears. We shed tears because we had caught a glimpse of the Peaceable Kingdom, and it had almost broken our hearts. For a few moments we had seen Eden and been part of the great dance that goes on at the heart of creation. We shed tears because we were given a glimpse of the way life was created to be and is not (*The Longing for Home*, pp. 126-127).

This is the way God wants the world to be because God can only create what is “not God” on the divine model; God has only Godself as model, and God is, we might say, harmonious dance, perfect friendship.

Given this theology, we can say that we, who are images of God, are made for similar relationships of friendship, friendship with God, with one another and with the whole of creation. This is the deepest desire of our hearts. When, like Buechner, we get a glimpse of this beautiful dance, we want it and we are, at the same time, heartbroken because it seems so far from what we have. Nonetheless, deep down we want only this, to be in tune with the dance that goes on at the heart of creation, to be friends with God. If we cannot have this, we cannot be happy. Hence, we are made to be a people of the First Commandment, people who recognize that they are made by and for God and live out of this recognition. We cannot have strange gods before us and have what we most want in this world—to live in friendship with God, with one

another and with the whole of creation, to live in harmony with the great dance of the Trinity that goes on at the heart of creation.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Well, if God and we both want the same thing, what's the problem? Why is it that so many of us feel at a great distance from God? The problem is fear. We imbibe fear with our mother's milk, it seems. We are afraid of others, afraid that they will take what we need or have, afraid that they will not accept us, afraid that they will hurt us. And we are afraid of God, afraid of closeness to God, afraid of God's rejection of us, afraid of being swallowed up in God. False images of God colonize our minds and hearts; so instead of expecting a welcoming look and an embrace of friendship from God, we expect angry judgment and rejection. We don't need to go into all the reasons for the fears that bedevil all our relationships including our relationship with God. Let's just take it for granted that fear inhabits our hearts, minds and souls like a fungus eating away at any peace we might have.

Yet for Jesus fear is the opposite of faith, not lack of belief in certain doctrines. Often in the gospels we hear him say things like, “Do not fear, only believe” (Mark 5:36) or when the disciples are terrified in a storm, “Where is your faith?” (Luke 8:25), or “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:3). Because of his own faith Jesus did not fear the leaders of his own religion, nor the Roman procurator who could and did put him to death.

When we are afraid, we begin to hedge our bets on God, begin to hoard like the rich man who built bigger and bigger barns in the gospel story. The temptation in the Garden is based on fear. The serpent insinuates that God is a rival to be feared, rather than a Father to be loved. In their fear they run away from their friendship with God; they no longer believe in God as the good Creator. Given the reality of the good world God creates and how good the good God is, their fear is irrational. They are actually insane, at least in this regard. They already had, by God's good will and grace, what they tried to gain by their own efforts; hence, they are afraid and try to hide from God, a futile and ultimately self-defeating action. The story of my retreat illustrates how fear arises from the insane desire to be in control of life.

My mention of insanity just now must have struck a familiar chord with anyone who knows the Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous or similar programs. All who have dealt with their own addictions and with those of others know what insanity is. It is the belief that we cannot live without whatever it is we crave. In the *Big Book* one woman puts it this way:

And still by the time I was thirty years old I was being pushed around with a compulsion to drink that was completely beyond my control. I couldn't stop drinking. I would hang on for sobriety for short intervals, but always there would come the tide of an overpowering *necessity* to drink and, as I was engulfed in it, I felt such a sense of panic that I really believed I would die if I didn't get that drink inside (3rd Edition, p. 306).

For addicts, what we crave becomes a graven image, an idol. It takes the place of God. This is insanity indeed. Of course, many of us get away with it for years because we seem to be sane. In an insane world sanity and insanity easily pass for their opposites. Remember, according to Mark's gospel, Jesus' family thought him insane, and the religious leaders considered him possessed by a demon (Mark 3:20-35). But the "cure" of our fear provided by the substance or activity or other person is only temporary, and gradually, but almost inexorably, more and more of the "cure" is needed to quell our fears. Our insanity becomes more and more evident, and we hit a wall that, if we are fortunate, forces us to face the truth. We are offered a glimpse into our insanity and there find God patiently waiting to welcome us back to sanity. To this experience I now turn.

THE TURN TO SANITY

Over the past year or so I have been impressed by the number of times I have come across people who are grateful for things that seem quite frightful. I have met depressed people who are grateful that they got depressed, sick people who are grateful for their sickness and alcoholics who are grateful that they are alcoholics. Many of them have said something like this: "I am grateful because the depression (alcoholism,

sickness) drew me back to God. I had lost contact with God, and now I've come back home." This is the message I take from a conversation in Gerard Goggins' novel *Anonymous Disciple*, based on the lives of two now deceased Jesuits of my province who found peace and serenity and even joy in the fellowship of A.A. In this scene Jim, the talkative one and the protagonist of the novel, is visited in the hospital late one night by Fred, the other Jesuit. Jim engages in this soliloquy.

"I wonder what kind of man I would be if I was not an alcoholic. I wonder what kind of Jesuit. I'd probably be proud and off the track. I'd have wound up being an apostate or a ladies' man. I would have been a disgrace to the Society. And instead, because I'm an alcoholic and because of A.A. and because of you, Fred, I have found love and peace and fulfillment. I have found friendship, and I have found my vocation even if it's not the one I expected" (pp. 167-168).

Jim was grateful for his alcoholism because it brought him back to friendship with God and with many other people as broken as he had been and still was. Moreover, he was a very happy man who drew people to him as light draws insects.

When I was provincial superior of my province in the 1990s, I said at our assemblies on more than one occasion, and only half jokingly: "When we entered the Society of Jesus, we didn't have to believe in God; we could believe in the Church which was growing by leaps and bounds, or in the Society of Jesus which was also enjoying the same kind of success. Now, with our numbers declining and our seminaries and novitiates half empty we can find out whether or not we believe in God." What I meant is what I am saying here. When things are going swimmingly for us, we can easily forget our Maker, imagining that everything is going so well because we are so good or so smart or so capable; and we can easily get into the mindset of believing that we deserve all the good things we have. We may even harbor, deep in our hearts, the unspoken thought that God is quite lucky to have us on his side. I know one man who is grateful that he is an alcoholic. He says, "Because I am so competent, I easily forget that all is gift. At least in this one area

I had to admit my absolute need for God. It has led me to the further realization of how much I use my competence to give me the illusion of control."

We come back to the First Commandment. We are never in control because we are creatures; only God is in control. You might say that the act of faith is a three step process, in fact the first three steps of the A.A. program. The first step is the recognition that one is powerless over alcohol. This recognition is the beginning of wisdom because we are powerless over more than alcohol; we are powerless over life itself ultimately. Some of us, maybe a great many of us, need to be brought up short to come to this realization, to the realization that much of our life is ruled by insanity. Insanity is the belief that we can control life. And this insanity leads to many of the useless fears that bedevil us. The second step begins with coming to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. In other words, we come to believe in the existence of God, a God who is waiting for us to turn to him. But the second step can remain only notional if it is not followed by the third step, making a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him. The third step is the act of faith. I put my uncontrollable life in God's hands in trust and hope, and then I do what I can to let God do the job of saving me. Faith requires the action of turning our lives over to God; in fact, it requires a repeated action every moment of our lives. Thus, faith is a way of life. We can only live without anxious fear insofar as we can turn our lives over to God. Sanity depends on the third step, and that dependence never ends. Hence, in a real sense all sane people are recovering addicts, because sane people are aware how fragile faith is and how easily they can succumb to idol worship.

HELP MY UNBELIEF

This brings me to my final point, the need continually to ask for greater and greater faith. In Mark's gospel Jesus is faced by a father whose son is possessed by a demon. The man says to Jesus, "but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus replies, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." And the father blurts out, "I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:14-29). This is a great prayer, and one that I constantly recommend to people. Like this man's faith, our faith,

in practice, is small. Yet, small though our faith is, there is at least a glimmer of belief. Because our faith is fragile and constantly under threat, we need to pray continually, "Help my unbelief." "Help me to believe more and more fully; help me to give up my futile attempts to control my life by my own efforts. Help me to enjoy life, not live in terror of it."

As we near the end of this article, I offer you another poem by Franz Wright, this one from the Pulitzer Prize winning book *Walking to Martha's Vineyard*.

One Heart

It is late afternoon and I have just returned from the longer version of my walk nobody knows about. For the first time in nearly a month, and everything changed. It is the end of March, once more I have lived. This morning a young woman described what it's like shooting coke with a baby in your arms. The astonishing windy and altering light and clouds and water were, at certain moments,
You.

There is only one heart in my body,
have mercy
on me.

The brown leaves buried all winter creatureless feet running over dead grass beginning to green, the first scent-less violet here and there, returned, the first star noticed all at once as one stands staring into the black water.

Thank You for letting me live for a little as one of the sane; thank You for letting me know what this is like. Thank You for letting me look at your frightening blue sky without fear, and your terrible world without terror, and your loveless psychotic and hopelessly lost

with this love

(Franz Wright, *Walking to Martha's Vineyard*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, p. 5. Used with permission).

According to the book jacket, Wright works at a mental health center now. Perhaps that is where we heard the woman speak of snorting coke while holding her baby; or perhaps it was at a Twelve Step meeting. Perhaps, too, that woman is “your loveless psychotic and hopelessly lost” person upon whom we can, because of God’s grace, look with love. The poem does sum up, in much shorter space, what I have been trying to say with so many more words.

CONCLUSION

God, the Mystery who is three in one, perfect friendship, creates a world of unimaginable beauty and goodness purely out of generosity. The world and all in it, including us, exist because God wants all. Human beings are the conscious, thinking, willing icons of God. We are made to be God’s conscious images in this world. And we are made to be friends of God and of one another and cooperators with God in the tending of our planet and its environs. To live happily and creatively in this world, all we have to do is live with faith in God, that is, with trust that no matter what happens God will take care of us. Insofar as we have this faith we live without fear. We are desired into existence for friendship with God, and, as Augustine wrote, our hearts are restless until they rest in God. But, for some reason, we are bedeviled by fears, we do not believe as we ought. Hence, we become addicts of one kind or another, looking for some thing or some person who will assuage our fears and make us feel safe. But all such searching is idol worship.

Finally, we must come to the realization that only God can save us from our fears and our addictions. Many of us need to hit a wall in order to have a chance of waking up to the reality that we are living insane lives as long as we believe that we can control things on our own. When we wake up to the real world, we find God patiently waiting for us, ready to help, ready to save us and make us whole. As the late Scottish philosopher John Macmurray said long ago: “The maxim of illusory religion runs: ‘Fear not; trust in God and He will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you’; that of real

religion, on the contrary, is ‘Fear not; the things that you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you, but they are nothing to be afraid of.’” Those who live the way of life of the Twelve Steps follow the maxim of real religion and have a shot at living without fear. With this faith in God we can say with Franz Wright:

Thank You for letting me live for a little
as one of the sane; thank You for letting
me know what this is like. Thank You
for letting me look at your frightening
blue sky without fear, and your terrible
world without terror, and your loveless
psychotic and hopelessly
lost
with this love.

RECOMMENDED READING

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T.S. Elliot's *Life Cycle*

James Torrens, S.J.



Erik Erikson has earned our gratitude by neatly laying out his eight stages of human development. Each stage offers a task to be achieved and a penalty, or lasting deprivation, if we do not negotiate the stage well. We look to writers and filmmakers for clarity about these various stages through stories, often derived from their own experience. Francisco Jimenez, for example, has drawn on his boyhood years following the crops with his farm-worker family for a precious set of stories, *The Circuit*. Ingmar Bergman's film *Wild Strawberries* takes us to the final stage of life, that of integration. A proud retiring professor is brought to his senses by having to face issues he had long ignored. (Erikson analyzes the film skillfully in *Adulthood*, a book he edited.)

In the poetry and drama of T. S. Eliot I find a set of five lifetime moments that constituted a life-cycle for him. Eliot moved from inadequacy and self-concern through conversion, to awakening and trust. They are not presented as his story, directly, yet his own experience is never far behind these texts. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 1915, conjures up a young man haunted by his sense of inadequacy. *The Waste Land*, 1922, a spectrum of shallow, self-concerned humanity, ends up concluding to the need of a courageous personal commitment. *Ash Wednesday*, 1930, expresses the struggle towards all-out spiritual change, against the insistent pull of the past. "Burnt Norton," 1936, the first of *Four Quartets*, treats of the adult's reawakening to a lost innocence. Finally, Eliot's play *The Cocktail Party*, 1950, reveals a mysterious providence helping our muddled lives come out right. While these movements do not overlap exactly with Erikson's stages of human development, they trace for us a path to wholeness and integration that we too might follow.

1.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," the pioneer poem of the Modernist era, has been one of my favorites over the years. Not only is it innovative and brilliant as a poem, it also, I once felt and still do, is about me. It is full of the self-doubts of a very correct young man, whose name declares him to be of a proper, buttoned-up family. We can see him as he describes himself, "My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin, / My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin." That pin is about as much assertion as Prufrock can manage.

The "love song" in the title is ironic. Prufrock would "love to" approach one of the sophisticated young women at a party in good society, but has to ask himself, "Do I dare?" and "Do I dare?" He is bluish about making any romantic move, imagining that the airy young women will make fun of him. And he is all too aware of still having time to exit. "Do I dare?" is a motif of the poem, and it reappears at a humorous extreme towards the very end, "Do I dare to eat a peach?" The motif also occurs in other words that have long stuck in my memory. The hapless young man, thinking of the females he would dearly love to approach, has to keep chiding himself: "And how should I presume?"

To sum it up, J. Alfred Prufrock finds himself bound up pretzel tight, all initiative stymied. These were the 1910s, when Freud was writing and lecturing on inhibition, and T. S. Eliot had found his perfect imaginative form. As a Harvard undergrad from a family with some link to Bostonian society, he was drawing on the environment he knew.

Eliot's Prufrock is not shallow. He is aware of the big existential questions, and of models of heroism, and of the social problems in the city about him, but he is intimidated from uttering these concerns. He can envision his moment of greatness, but at the same time he imagines a snicker from the wings, admitting to the hearer of his "song," "And in short, I was afraid." J. Alfred Prufrock cannot even take a first timid step. In our present era of non-commitment, his repeated question, "And how should I presume?" is amplified for many people.

2.

During his anxious search for meaning in dark times after World War I, and groping toward maturity of affections and action, Eliot inscribed some powerful lines into the conclusion of *The Waste Land*, his poetic collage of lost souls and unhealthy society. Here and there, in this long poem ranging all over world literature, we find the poet asking whether renewal and reintegration are at all possible. His text answers its yes at the end, with sharp emphasis: "Then spoke the thunder." The answer comes with three Sanskrit words from one of the *Upanishads* of India, words all deriving from the Indo-European root *da*, "give." The first is *datta*.

Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms

Eliot never seems to be writing in a confessional or autobiographical way. Still, he could well be reflecting here on his marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood in 1915, the most daring and impulsive move of his life. It happened at a period of recoil from academic earnestness, when he also determined to cut loose from native propriety and anything of the Prufrock in him. The marriage was born of sudden attraction to a smart but flamboyant woman of frank and unpredictable behavior. The aftermath proved costly in the extreme, including Vivienne's dependency on addictive medicines and confinement for mental illness. (See the fine biography, *T.S. Eliot, an Imperfect Life*, by Lyndall Gordon.)

Eliot faced the mess made by his unwise decision as long and as much as he could. Given the rashness of his leap, what are we to derive from the words just quoted about generous self-surrender as the one

hope for humanity? The words remain very true, very challenging. They simply do not dispense with prudent decision and a sense of who one truly is. To reverse a theme from Eliot's later play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, the poet was doing the wrong thing for the right reason. (Thomas a Becket, facing martyrdom and tempted by visions of sainthood, feared doing the right thing for the wrong reason.)



Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* is about a turning point in life, turning away from worldly and natural pleasures—what he calls “the infirm glory of the positive hour”—to contemplation, the divine light and the Anglo-Catholic faith. The years when his tension at home and in public with his wife Vivienne was extreme were also the years of his religious conversion. In the poem a “veiled sister,” who “honours the Virgin in meditation,” keeps reappearing, “going in white and blue, in Mary's colour.” This figure of an intercessor, addressed as “Lady,” owes a great deal to Matilda in *The Divine Comedy*, interceding for the pilgrim Dante at the summit of Mount Purgatory.

The speaker of *Ash Wednesday* expresses a profound unworthiness. Much of the poem is a prayerful plea: “Teach us to care and not to care,” “Lord, I am not worthy / but speak the word only,” “Suffer me not to be separated / and let my cry come unto Thee” (the poem's final words). The most vivid parts of *Ash Wednesday* come where he recalls his delight in the beauties of earth, and in his spectral climb up the purgatorial stairs, “struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears / the deceitful face of hope and of despair.” As the title itself will suggest, *Ash Wednesday* is Eliot's take on the spiritual combat, a midlife time of tension between aspiration and regrets not easily stifled, where the soul cries out for delivery. This poet had much to be delivered from. Lyndall Gordon puts it well, “Eliot's greatness, I believe, shows itself . . . in a struggle with certain flaws in his nature, a long struggle that gave birth to the spiritual journeys of his maturity” (p. 109).



From the mid-1930s and well into World War II, T.S. Eliot in London wrestled with the classic problems of mysticism and spirituality, which resulted in his *Four Quartets*. His awareness of the music of poetry was never keener nor more flexible in its modes. “Burnt Norton,” the first of the *Quartets*, he starts off with a philosophic problem, the human subjection to time even while one is attracted to the Absolute, the timeless. In this context, he gazes toward lost childhood, lost innocence, with a kind of sigh, a sense of “If only!”

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose garden.

These musings were provoked by Eliot's visit to an English country mansion, where he imagines children of old playing and hiding excitedly in the formal garden. The poet there realizes that, caught as we are “in the form of limitation / between un-being and being,” we are being moved towards a recovery of innocence, towards the childlike state (the one mentioned in the gospels?), so as to enter it for the first time. “There rises the hidden laughter / of children in the foliage / quick now, here, now, always.” And in the rose garden of this old mansion, the visitor is able to rest in the love that gazes upon us as a rose with the same beauty and goodness as does a rose—including the allegorical rose of the famous long medieval poem, *The Romance of the Rose*.



In his mature years, those that gave us *Four Quartets*, Eliot as playwright wrote *The Cocktail Party*. It is set in London among adult party-givers and party-goers in their own social circle. It has a comic aura to animate the proceedings, due to a chatty fussbudget and a colonial inspector full of stories. And it has an aura of mystery, due to an unidentified guest, who turns out in later scenes to be a psychiatrist.

The plot of *The Cocktail Party* turns upon a married couple who have grown cold to each other. The wife seems to have skipped out. Her husband, who is left with hosting this entourage, has had an affair going with Celia, the young single woman present; and the young man in the group looks to Celia with romantic yearning. It was all very contemporary in 1950 and still is.

The characters not part of the problem here gradually appear as part of the solution. Julia and Alex act as catalysts to keep interaction going, and Reilly is available as plainspoken guide to their troubled confessions. When the three eventually announce themselves as The Guardians, we realize they have acted with intentionality throughout. They have been a providence for the four adults.

If this comes close to home for us, it should. Plenty of us will admit that such guardians, as part of an overarching providence, are what get us through the long stretch of a commitment, with its ups and downs, its consolations and desolations. The young woman Celia is of particular interest in the play. She has come to feel that there's something wrong with the world itself and that she is drawn to silence and selflessness. The psychiatrist Reilly tells her, "I can reconcile you to the human condition, / the condition to which some who have gone as far as you / have succeeded in returning." He has, in fact, facilitated a reunion of the older couple, Edward and Lavinia. But Celia has much further to go, into a missionary vocation where, on a remote island, she will have to give up her life.

The three conspirators, at one point in *The Cocktail Party*, pick up their glasses for a libation and a prayer that Celia's solitary journey be watched over. This was the journey that Eliot himself had long been undertaking in his deepest desires and in his heart. His reasons to trust in providence had all the while been strengthening.

We all have our version of Erik Erikson's stages to pass through on our way to an integrated faith and humanity. Each of us can notice and own up to our blunderings, we can recognize when we have come out into the clear, and we can attribute our help to its sources. T. S. Eliot, along with his powers of understanding, had the poetic gift to display crises and

transformations, his own and what he wished for the world. He encourages us to such moments of understanding and afterwards, in some form, to some effort to tell the world.

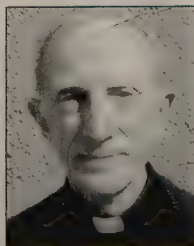
Steering Me Straight

Right there's the accident,
dear guardian, where I ventured
onto the expressway
too soon, too slow.
The horn came blaring by us.

More than once, thank you,
it never happened. I tremble
for each hair-raising time,
dear companion, dear guide,
thinking how close a call.

So finally some shocks
inevitable: young driver
into me, me into one unseen.
Crash! Crunch!
Yet we all walk away.

Got to believe you,
angel, hand upon mine,
steering the steerer,
our way long, long,
you not for a second dazed.



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Supervision of Pastoral Ministry Students

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANN GARRIDO



Ann Garrido, D. Min., teaches at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, directing the doctoral program in preaching and the masters program in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Prior to that, she served for seven years as the Director of Field Education and Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology there. An active member of the Catholic Association for Theological Field Education, she served as the steering committee chair of the organization from 2004-2006. Ann is the co-editor of *The Theology of Priesthood* and author of *Mustard Seed Preaching*. She has spoken widely on the topics of ministry formation and theological reflection in diocesan, academic, and health care settings. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT interviewed her just prior to the publication of her book *A Concise Guide to Supervising a Ministry Student* (Ave Maria Press, 2008).

What motivated you to write the book?

I've been in field education for a number of years. There is very slim literature in the field and most of it is from Protestant sources. While there are a lot of parallels between the Catholic and Protestant situations, there are some things that are distinctive to our ecclesial setting. There had been one other book by Regina Coll (*Supervision of Ministry Students*, Liturgical Press, 1992). We have used her book for a long time and it was very helpful. But it was more on the theory than the practice of supervision. Many of the supervisors would call with questions about how to handle different situations. There wasn't a resource that addressed those types of questions. So when I got a sabbatical I decided that I wanted to write the book because it was the book that I had always wanted to hand out.

What in your own experience of supervision, both as a student and a supervisor, helped you put this book together?

Directing field ed has been a great experience of "human development" for me. When I first began I had no idea of how many different things could happen!

When I was a field ed student myself, of course I had a supervisor. But at that time I made the mistake of choosing a friend to serve as my supervisor. Midway through the experience I realized that it was really an abuse of the friendship. So at that point in my life I became a lot clearer about the distinction between supervision and friendship.

I also had an excellent experience of supervision when I did clinical pastoral education (C.P.E.). The supervisor whom I worked with was a very experienced Lutheran minister, well trained in supervision. That was where I really saw what could happen in a great supervisory experience. He asked me just the right kind of questions. He helped me to gain new insights into what I was doing in ministry and how my pastor affected the way I was ministering. He taught me practical ways to develop strategies for learning and how to measure them to see whether growth had happened. So that was a very powerful experience of supervision in my own life.

When I became field ed director I recognized what a huge diversity of personalities there was among students and supervisors. I was able to see from a new perspective what made for a good match between a supervisor and a student, what kind of learning environments were really fruitful, and what didn't work. I gained a little more objectivity about the obstacles that keep supervision from really being effective. And I realized that most of these things could be fixed with just a little bit of tweaking. Just a little bit of advance information can often keep things from going awry.

That's what the book provides—different scenarios, examples of situations and how to approach the issues involved. All of the case studies in the book are well disguised, but they are all true. In some way, shape, or form they are taken either from my own life or experiences I have had with students.

What are you looking for in a supervisor?

Over time I have made many mistakes in this area. At first, I wanted somebody with a great personality who was really successful in ministry so the student could simply watch how this person did ministry and imitate it. Then I began to recognize that good supervision isn't about imitation, but about helping another person discover his or her own voice in ministry and allowing that voice to blossom.

This might look quite different from the way the supervisor ministers. A good supervisor knows that the other person is not going to be a "mini-me." A supervisor is someone who has an eye for the gifts in the person and an ability to help those gifts flower, someone who has the capacity to be nurturing but is also direct and challenging.

The supervisor also has to have an eye for the common good and the larger church. It is not only a question of being able to be responsible for this particular person and helping that person flourish, but also of helping that person to flourish for the good of the church as a whole. The supervisor has to be a person with the capacity to think with the mind of the Church and to serve the larger needs of the Church by serving the individual.

Do the people you approach to be supervisors find that description a little daunting?

I think that a time arrives in an experienced minister's natural cycle of development when you enter into a new type of generativity. A point comes where you become really good at what you are doing and in order not to go dry, you need to mentor somebody else who can ask you fresh questions and make you reflect on your own ministry. Supervision becomes a learning experience for the supervisor as well.

I think many people reach a phase in their own growth as a minister where the next natural step is for them to mentor somebody. What field ed directors have to look for is people who are at that point. These are people who through their life experience have begun to develop a vision of the whole for the good of the church. They have an eye for formation issues. I don't think it is overwhelming to them because it is the next stage in their own natural development.

So you are in the privileged position of inviting experienced ministers to take that next step into this stage.

When I first started doing this it was the students who would name someone whom they would like to have as a supervisor, or a parish would call and ask for a ministry student. Slowly we have shifted away from those models. Oftentimes students identified great ministers, but they were people who did not have the time that is required to supervise or to help the student reflect. Sometimes ministers are functioning purely on charisma. They know what they are doing, but they have a hard time teaching someone else how to do it. And then, in the other scenario, often when people call and ask us to send them a student what they are really looking for is a volunteer.

We look for the excellent ministers in our community, but also people who have this vision for the whole, who have the capacity for reflection, and a certain

objectivity. It's a special skill set that is required to mentor somebody else in ministry.

Earlier you said that when you started this you had no idea what could happen in this relationship. I sensed that this was a two edged sword. Did you mean both the pitfalls and the potential of the relationship?

Yes. I had no idea that things could go quite as awry as they sometimes do. I've had a supervisor fire a student. I've had blatant breaches of confidentiality. Students have overstepped personal boundaries that should never have been broken. Over time I've become clearer and clearer about the potential stumbling blocks that we can be proactive about and talk through before they happen. Often we don't give students a clear picture of what our vision of good ministry looks like. We only tell them when it doesn't happen. I think that being proactive and letting them know about some of the issues that could be just around the corner can help them be on their watch for them.

But the great grace has been that I had no idea of how transforming doing field education and supervision could be for the students, and even more so for me. I had no idea how much it was going to make me have to do things that I had always avoided doing. A lot of good field ed direction is about handling conflict well and handling difficult conversations well.

Most people try to avoid handling conflict. It sounds like you have learned how to embrace it.

It's true, and that has been the biggest shift in my own life because conflict was always something that I was afraid of. I have finally reached the point where now when a conflictual situation comes up it no longer frightens me. I actually think, "Wow! This is going to be a great learning situation. This has great potential." If students can experience how conflict can be handled well it might shift the dynamics of how they are going to handle conflict in ministry for the long haul. They might not continually enter into a pattern of avoidance or aggressiveness in the future. So I always think that if a good conflict comes up in field education it is something to get excited about. It presents an excellent opportunity for learning that may not occur again. Students will not get another chance to handle conflict in such a reflective manner as they do in field ed.

So when the supervisory relationship is working, one of its characteristics is the ability to handle conflict. What are some other factors that make a relationship work?

Great supervisory relationships happen when both persons have a secure sense of self, when both people know what their own gifts and shortcomings are, and when they both recognize that they have something to learn from each other and from the site that they are in. When they have a certain respect for the sacramentality of the site and for the idea that God is going to be present there, then ministry has a revelational quality to it. Then the two of them can learn something together from the people that they are working with in this site and from the things that happen there. Then they will both approach the site with a sense of adventure. That's when the theological reflection is really rich.

If the mentor comes in thinking: "I'm going to instruct you; I am going to fill you with what is in my mind," then generally nothing is going to happen in the relationship. Or if the student comes in thinking: "I don't have anything to learn; I'm just doing this to fulfill a requirement," then again, nothing usually happens. But if both people come in thinking: "Something amazing is going to happen here," then they both have the opportunity to get a new insight into how God is working in this particular parish, this hospital, this jail. Then just the dynamism of sitting together before the word of God present in this situation creates amazing things.

So the biggest pitfall is not something that might go wrong, not a disagreement about theology or a personality conflict, but having the wrong attitude—a supervisor who thinks he is a teacher or the student who thinks he has nothing to learn.

Then it will just be flat.

Conflict can move a relationship forward.

When conflict happens it means that you are getting somewhere. It means you have broken through the initial level. One of the supervisory relationships that I witnessed that went the most awry was because neither party had curiosity. Both thought that they had a good model of ministry and they were never curious to find out what the other person thought. They weren't curious to find out what the people in the pews

nought either. If a supervisor and a student can be curious together and wonder about things together—not having to have all the answers—then good things can happen. When supervisors tell me that they don't know enough to mentor a student, I remind them that if they can wonder together about something without having to have the answer, they will have gone a long way.

What are the similarities and differences between the supervisory relationship and spiritual direction?

One way that the two are alike is that the focus in both is on where God is alive and active in my life in this site. Supervision is a little more focused on one's role as minister than spiritual direction is. It does not deal so much with one's personal life unless it intersects with one's ministry. One thing I learned from my C.P.E. supervisor was: If it is not impacting your ministry then it is not the business of the supervisor. But what we discover is that a lot of one's life experience impacts one's ministry. So a lot of life history is part of supervision. But the focus is always on the person's function and role as minister.

The other area where it is different is that supervision functions in the external forum. This means that as a supervisor my commitment is to both the person in ministry and to the Church. Most of the time those two are in perfect harmony. I serve the church by serving my supervisee. But if there should develop a tension between those two, my first allegiance has to be for the good of the Church. If as a supervisor I see things within a student, patterns of behavior, dynamics, or interactions that are concerning, I have to report these things for the good of the Church. I have to turn them over to the director of field ed. What happens in supervision is confidential, but it is not like the seal of confession or the level of confidentiality that I expect in a spiritual director. If there is something that has to be reported to a higher authority it must be reported. Whereas, spiritual direction happens in the internal forum. Whatever happens between you and I in spiritual direction is highly confidential and the spiritual director's first allegiance is to the directee as a person and his or her own spiritual growth and development in relationship to God. And that information would never be turned over to a field ed director or anyone else.

But in the supervisory relationship everything has to be transparent. So, I don't let supervisors write anything about a student that the student wouldn't see. They need to know that the director of field education is a third person in this conversation.

And is a counseling relationship any different?

Like the spiritual director, the counselor's first allegiance has to be to you as a person. Whereas in supervision, your primary allegiance is to the church.

And how about the comparison to a performance appraisal in a work environment?

When you are an employer and you are doing an employee evaluation you want to grow that person for the sake of the community or the company that you are serving together. In that case your first allegiance is to the place you are serving and the people there.

Supervision is broader. So you're not really evaluating a student for this particular site, you are giving them feedback about what would help them flourish as a minister overall. You may think that this person is not a good fit for this parish but is going to be a great gift for the larger church. But when you are an employer, what you are looking for is whether this person's skill set and gifts match this particular setting and meet the needs of these particular people here.

You describe theological reflection as the heart of the supervisory relationship. What do you mean when you use the term theological reflection?

In his book *Ethics and Pastoral Ministry* (Paulist Press, 1995) Richard Gula describes theological reflection as the process of making connections between faith and life. When we understand our own life story in light of something we have received from the gospel, or when we understand the gospel better in light of something in our own life experience, we are engaged in theological reflection. When the gospel and life are illuminating each other, when a connection is being made, that is theological reflection. The point that Gula makes is that this is the unique skill that people expect out of a minister. There are lots of things that ministry shares in common with other helping professions. But the unique thing that you go to your minister for is help making connections between faith and life.

Theological reflection is at the heart of field education because this skill is possibly the most important one that students will need to succeed in ministry. In field ed we often focus on doing theological reflection on events, experiences, and themes that arise in the

ministry placement to help the person make connections between faith and their life as a minister. It is important that these times for reflection be at a separate time from the business meeting. In theological reflection sessions they can use theology and faith as resources for making decisions, for discovering meaning, for wondering together about what is happening in this ministry. Together they can ask: How is God speaking to us? What are we going to do?

Are there certain kinds of questions that you ask to lead a student into theological reflection?

I ask the student in advance to bring an incident that they want to think about. It could be something that involves a decision. Or it could be something about which they have strong feelings. Those are the two easiest avenues through which to enter into theological reflection. We often start with a prayer for openness and insight into what God would want us to learn from this experience. Then I ask them to narrate the experience as briefly as they can with all the relevant details.

Do you ask them to identify theological or ministerial issues as part of this?

Generally the first question that I ask is: What is going on here? We look at it from the widest perspective and imagine many different threads crisscrossing in it. We examine the different threads as they exist in this particular time and place. What from the larger culture, from the tradition of the church, from your own personal history, and from the personal histories of the other people involved led to this event happening? We try to name the threads without judging them. If we do this as a habit over the course of a year we begin to see patterns.

One of the most common threads that emerges is the issue of time. Individualism is also often a thread. It comes up in all types of cases. The priest shortage is a thread that manifests itself in so many situations that arise.

The second thing I often ask is: What are the questions that this event raises for you? If similar questions arise for a student again and again we try to focus on the underlying question and reflect on it over a longer period of time.

What are some of these long term questions that arise?

I find that there are three big questions: What am I called to do? What does this mean? And who am I as a minister?

How can this supervisory experience carry over beyond formal theological training when one does not have the benefit of supervision?

Supervision can be a lifelong practice. The person who was your supervisor may no longer be available, but you can ask someone else to reflect with you about ministry. Maybe it's a partner whom you meet with regularly and you both bring an incident for co-reflection.

Ministry is a process of ongoing development. Setting goals for growth and finding someone who can help you be accountable for them can be tremendously helpful. We can continue to set learning goals for ourselves our whole lives long. The finest ministers I've met are people who consider themselves to be lifelong students, who have a lifelong curiosity.

Ongoing development also includes self-assessment. It's a process of asking questions like: How did I handle a difficult situation? Should I seek counseling for an issue that impacts me in ministry? Self-assessment means being attentive to the ways in which God speaks to me in ministry.

How did writing this book affect you?

All of ministry is about the other. It's not about having one's own needs met. But in a mysterious, gracious way God continues to grow and change us as we minister, and we discover the many ways that God is always active through us as we minister on behalf of others.

When I wrote about this idea in the book I asked supervisors how they had changed over time in being a supervisor. What was transformative for them? Listening to their stories and reflecting on my own experiences helped me realize what a sacred journey it has been, what a gift it has been in my own spiritual life to be able to mentor another person in ministry. □

Respecting Ownership and Creativity in the Online World

Randy Schultz, Ed.D.



*Were I the perfect child of God, whose faith was deep and
whose love was broad. . . .*

—John Bell

I remember my first computer. I was a bit behind the curve and not the early adopter that I have become. It was a Franklin, which was an Apple IIe clone. It smelled of new circuits and excitement. I quickly set it up in our front room and proceeded to see what it could do. I told my friends at work what I had bought. Then a curious thing began to happen. People began to offer me all kinds of software. Not just free stuff, but entire suites of office products and games and other new software. I had hit a technological gold mine. I was a poor new teacher and couldn't afford much of what was being offered. I wish I could say I was only tempted back then.

Fast forward to today. With technology doubling its capacity every 18 months (Moore's Law), the opportunities for temptation have grown exponentially. What is a good Catholic Christian to do? We already know the answer to the question. I knew it back then, and I know it even more strongly today.

What are some of the ethical issues in our twenty-first century technological world? In the news, we hear about college students downloading whole papers from the Internet and submitting them as their own work. Sites like Turnitin.com, where students turn in their papers in order for them to be scanned for plagiarism, are created because there is a need for them. Best-selling authors are found to have copied their works from other, lesser known writers or to just plain make things up for their million dollar memoirs.

The list of areas where we can get ourselves in trouble continues to grow as rapidly as new technologies are discovered. What does copyright mean in these technological times? What constitutes plagiarism? What is okay for us to download to our personal computers? Is it okay to make a CD of our favorite songs for all the wedding guests?

It is similar to our knowledge of mortal and venial sins—we are not sure what the definitive list is. We understand the big taboos, but do we wriggle out of or fudge on the other ones? We are brought up to follow the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." The Catechism of the Catholic Church breaks it down for us: "The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one's neighbor and wronging him in any way with respect to his goods" (CCC 2401). This seems clear—don't take from your neighbor what is not yours. With the advent of the

Internet and the way it has made the world that much smaller, just who is our neighbor these days? The catechism goes on to state: "It commands justice and charity in the care of earthly goods and the fruits of men's labor." I believe this covers those labors that are created through technological endeavors. And finally, the catechism clearly asks us to respect what each other owns or has created: "For the sake of the common good, it requires respect for the universal destination of goods and respect for the right to private property" (CCC 2401).

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL—NOR RATIONALIZE

The commandment mandates "Thou shalt not steal," but in these technological times, would not "Thou shalt not rationalize" be more apt?

Because unfortunately, we do find ways to rationalize our use of technologies—while at work or at home. Perhaps you have heard the following rationalization scenarios. Or perhaps you may have taken part in one or two yourself.

There is the "I earned it" rationalization. We use our hard work as an excuse to take, use, or abuse the technology available at work. Consider this scenario. Bob goes to work everyday. He rarely takes a vacation day; he tells himself he hardly ever takes his full lunch break. He believes he is an exemplary employee. So every once in a while, when he has a few quiet moments at work, he runs his eBay shop via his work Internet. And why not? He has "earned it," he rationalizes. Maybe he is the great employee he thinks he is, but if his workplace policy does not allow any private business on the company Internet, he is stealing company bandwidth for his own personal use. This counts as stealing, even if Bob is using the company Internet to work on his church's website during his downtime. A corollary to the "I earned it" rationalization is the "They don't pay us enough" one, which many feel justifies them to do what they want on company time.

Another scenario: Betty works at a company that is updating all their computers. The old computers and monitors are destined for the landfill. A friend of Betty's has told her that he could build her a great computer for really cheap—all she would need is a monitor. She reasons that since the monitors will end up in the landfill anyway, by taking only one of them she is helping the environment and putting less stress on the landfill. This

is the "They were going to throw it away anyway" rationalization. Again, the company policy should dictate our actions. Some companies might well "lend" you the monitor for an indefinite amount of time. Others have ironclad rules that require them to dispose of their hardware through auction or landfill. Just because the procedures for disposal do not make sense to us does not mean we get to make up our own rules, at least, not if we want to live our Christian faith with integrity.

How about when Ted starts downloading music at work for his new MP3 player? His rationalizations can run the gamut from the standard "I deserve it" to the "They expect us to do it" excuse. The former reason covers Ted (he thinks) because he has his new toy and he deserves the music; the latter covers him for his downloading music without paying for it. What a great rationalization the "They expect us to do it" excuse is: who exactly is the "they" who expect us to behave so badly? Are "they" the record industry? The movie industry? The software industry? Our place of business?

Fictitious Bob, Betty and Ted can always counter any discussion about the legality of their actions with the "I'm not hurting anybody" rationalization. When confronted by the reality that someone is losing money by these thefts, they always can bring up additional sub-clauses, such as "They make tons of money anyway" and "They charge way too much." Which leads into what may very well be the number one reason for taking things off the Internet: "Everybody does it." It is difficult to argue this one, since it often appears to be very true. Unfortunately, I still have my mother's words echoing in the back of my head: "If everybody jumped off a bridge, would you jump too?"

So how do we as Christians deal with these attitudes in the workplace? We need to ask ourselves a different set of questions, like, "Would Jesus work on his eBay store while at work?" "Would St. Peter download illegal music?" "Would Mother Theresa take home a monitor for her homebuilt computer?" These questions may sound absurd at first, but if we take a moment, they address the foundation of our faith, as they give us examples of lives that show us the way. The seeming absurdity of these saintly people in these modern scenarios can drive home the sinfulness of our carefully thought out rationalizations.

So we Christians are not always saintly when it comes to the use of technology. Sadly, in April of the year the movie *The Passion of the Christ* was released, it

quickly became the number one illegal movie download (*Los Angeles Times*, 2004). It had slipped off the list of Top Ten Movies by then, unfortunately skyrocketing to a different Top Ten. One rationalization that I heard for this behavior was "I'm planning on buying a copy as soon as it comes out."

UNDERSTANDING COPYRIGHT

What I intend to do now is to discuss some of the major (and a few of the minor) infractions we are guilty of when using technology. What are the pitfalls? My hope is to give us a chance to raise ourselves above the fray and to do the right thing, despite the ample number of rationalizations available to us to do the wrong thing.

The best place to start is copyright. The compound word is composed of "copy," or to make a reproduction of, and "right", whether or not you are permitted to do so. The Copyright Office of the United States has a considerable amount of information on what constitutes copyright. The precept is fairly simple: copyright is granted to the authors of "original works of authorship," including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. If we did not author it, it is not ours.

Section 106 of the 1976 Copyright Act generally gives the owner of copyright the exclusive right to do and to authorize others to do the following:

- To reproduce the work in copies or phonorecords;
- To prepare derivative works based upon the work;
- To distribute copies or phonorecords of the work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending;
- To perform the work publicly, in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, and pantomimes, motion pictures and other audiovisual works;
- To display the copyrighted work publicly, in the case of literary, musical, dramatic, and choreographic works, and pantomimes, pictorial,

graphic, or sculptural works, including the individual images of a motion picture or other audiovisual work; and

- In the case of sound recordings, to perform the work publicly by means of a digital audio transmission.

There are eight types of original works that can be copyrighted:

- literary works
- musical works, including any accompanying words
- dramatic works, including any accompanying music
- pantomimes and choreographic works
- pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works
- motion pictures and other audiovisual works
- sound recordings
- architectural works

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act was enacted on October 12, 1998, and it added specific laws governing digital media and other digital activities. One major item it covered was to make it unlawful to circumvent the anti-piracy measures built into most commercial software.

Why is it necessary for a good Christian to follow the copyright laws? We should be following them because there is nothing unjust about the copyright laws. There is no rationalization that will allow us to break them honestly. They are there to protect the authorship of others. Anyone who has taken the time to write a story, compose a song, paint a picture or plan a good photograph knows the time and commitment it takes to accomplish these things.

The catechism also has something to say about creative works. Remember the seventh commandment—the one about stealing? It commands us to be just and to care for the "earthly goods and the fruits of men's labor" (CCC 2401). The fruits of a person's labor encompass all that s/he has created. If the created object is freely given, it is okay for us to take, but if it is not (and if it's not clear), it is not ours for the taking.

How do we break the copyright laws? Usually we do so simply and naively. We make a music CD for our friends, we download a movie that we intend to buy once it comes out, we bring home office software to load on our home computer. At times we can even rationalize the “borrowing” of someone’s operating system because we “just want to see if it would work for us.” We cross the line without really thinking about it. We have become “of the world” rather than just being in it. Paul’s letter to the Colossians warns us of the seduction that can happen: “See to it that no one captivates you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ” (2:8).

All these bits of data, music and software that we use were created by someone else, and no matter how we try to rationalize our decisions, no matter how captivated we are by their availability, we are not authorized to steal them. They are not ours to distribute freely or to take from one another. Ownership of some software is not ownership of the whole company.

By understanding the simple aspects of copyright, it is not hard for anyone to stay on the right side of copyright protection laws. How many of us know someone who’s been taken in and thrown into the slammer for violating them, though? I would imagine not many of us. There are those few college students and others arrested for music downloads, and every so often we hear about a huge DVD-copying group getting busted. But most of the time, the crimes themselves go unpunished (on this earth).

Breaking copyright laws is not the sole way we circumvent our moral code when it comes to technology use. Have you ever used the office copier to make your garage sale posters? Or borrowed the office shredder for personal use? Or taken an office digital camera home to practice with, and then taken it on your summer vacation? Sometimes the only thing that stops us is the fear of getting caught, so we conveniently ask someone who really has no authority to okay our request. This can calm our conscience, but still does not make it right. I remember the CCD class on conscience—my conscience was described to me as a “spinning triangle,” and each time I thought about doing something wrong it would prick my soul. But over time, the tips of the triangle would be chipped whenever rationalization won over conscience, until eventually the spinning triangle

became a spinning non-pricking circle. This is how we make our misuse of technologies acceptable. Our catechism is very clear on these points:

Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings (CCC 1783).

This should be what goes through our minds prior to using a blank CD or DVD from work to make a copy of illegally downloaded music or videos and then printing a label for it on the office printer.

PROPER USES OF TECHNOLOGIES

The question becomes, “Then what can we do?” Fortunately there is plenty. There is a plethora of legal music download sites, including iTunes.com, Amazon.com, emusic.com; even Napster.com is now legitimate. These sites require payment in some form or another. SpiralFrog.com allows you to download songs for free while watching advertisements. Another site is Jamando.com, a site where musicians allow listeners to download their music for free. You won’t find your favorite bands from your youth here, but you will find plenty of talented musicians creating a variety of musical styles.

Jamando is one of many sites that operates under a “Creative Commons” license. The Creative Commons motto is: “Share, Remix, Reuse—Legally.” Creative Commons allows a variety of developers and creators to mark their works with a CC instead of the ©, which allows the author to change the copyright terms from “All Rights Reserved” to “Some Rights Reserved.” As a result, many articles, musical compositions, and movies give us, the end-users, the right to enjoy the works created without breaking copyright laws.

What if you missed your favorite television show or are hankering for a movie and do not feel like paying?

These too are available online. Hulu.com archives a tremendous amount of media content, all of which is available to watch on your computer. Most of the major networks allow you to catch up on shows you have missed from their current line-up. All of these require a broadband connection in order to stream the content to your computer. Additionally, you may have to watch an advertisement or two (or three).

Suppose you just bought a used computer at a garage sale. Unless the owner has also given you the software and operating system in tangible form (box, CD, disk), you really should start from scratch, buying and loading your own operating system and software.

Fortunately, there are several ways to populate your new purchase with legal software. Freeware is software freely given by a developer. It is not shareware, which requires a payment after a short demo period. A user license or EULA (End User License Agreement) will be part of the freeware download, wherein the user agrees not to "alter the program, repackage it, or sell it. It might allow redistribution, however, as long as the program is unchanged and the license agreement intact" (Kayne, 2008).

Open source is a development methodology that many times allows us, as end users, to have free software. All software has a written code or a "source" code. By making it open, the developer allows other developers to have access to the source code. Many times they are allowed to change the code and offer the software application to us, the users. The granddaddy of all open source applications is actually an operating system: Linux. But there are plenty of software applications that will run on the Windows or Mac operating systems, too. And they do not require any more computer expertise than you might already have. If you can load software, there is a world of open source applications available to you, from office suites to music players to photo editing tools.

Another movement to free our consciences is a host of online tools that are now available. Loosely bunched together under the term "Web 2.0," these tools have much of the functionality of our computer-based applications, but they are housed completely online. Google has a complete office suite with a word processor (Google Docs), a spreadsheet, and a presentation tool much like PowerPoint. For the amateur photographer, Adobe has a complete photo editing application online called Photoexpress, as well as "Buzzword," their own online word processor.

CONCLUSION

In the end it will be the children who will lead us. In 2005, a group of Christian students in Australia who had been studying the Bible came to the conclusion that downloading music illegally was the same as stealing, and therefore breaking the seventh commandment. Here's what they did next: They turned in over 2000 CDs of illegally burnt music, mostly by creating a large wall hanging with the CDs glued to it. Their consciences would not allow them to rationalize any longer.

Recently my laptop drive died. I purchased a new drive and installed it myself (a scary ordeal for a semi-tech like me). As I was pondering what to do with my new and pristine drive, a thought occurred to me: Why not use only those programs that are freely given? Not shareware, but freeware and open source. My newly repaired laptop is the opposite of my first computer. It has nothing stolen on it. The software, the music, and even the movies are all legally downloaded (and free). Believe it or not, I am practicing what I preach. And it makes me wonder—if Jesus had a laptop, what would Jesus download?

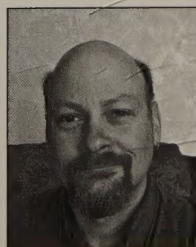
RECOMMENDED READING

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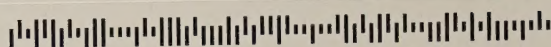
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